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ABSTRACT

This document contains a curriculum guide for teachers and a companion reading guide for adult literacy students reading at the fourth- to sixth-grade level. The curriculum guide contains three chapters: Work, Families, and Housing. The guide takes student interest as a starting point and asks students to stretch comprehension, perception, and reading skills. Each chapter contains some or all of the following: one or more short literature works; "reflecting on our own experience"; "reflecting on other's thoughts/experiences"; worksheets; and examples. The student guide contains readings, examples, and worksheets that help students improve reading and writing skills relating the topics of the three chapters. (NLA)

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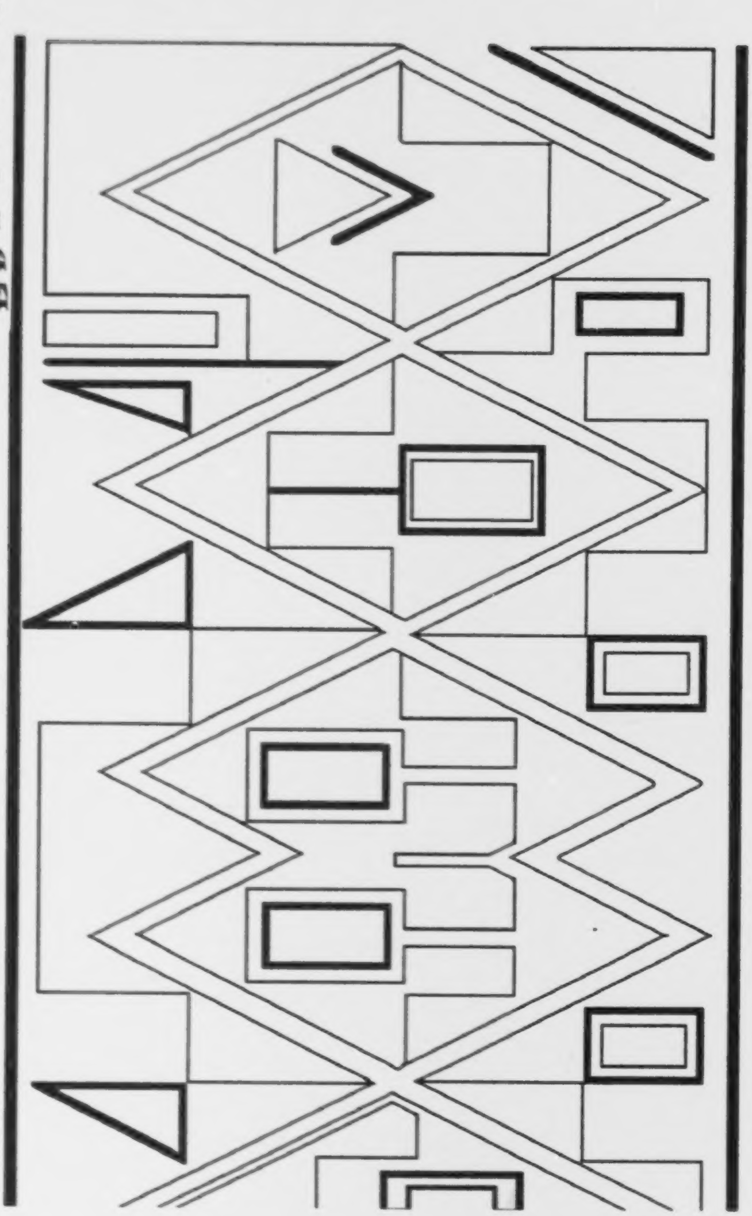

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Readings That Matter: A Literature and Life Issues Curriculum

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A curriculum for intermediate and advanced literacy students who want to read works by important authors that relate to life's important issues.

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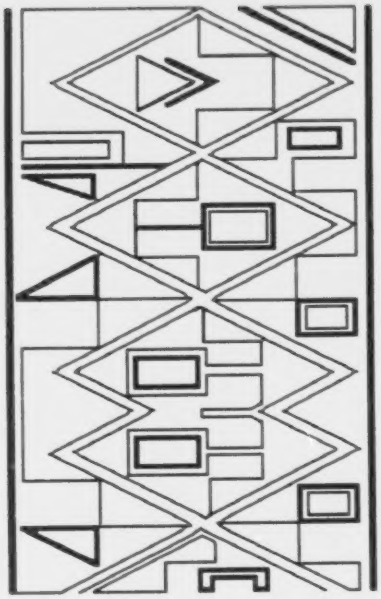

INTRODUCTION

If you have taught adults to read before, then you know that classes work best when they are focused on topics that are of importance to students. If teaching is new to you, this is a good book to begin to learn on, because it is based on topics that are almost always of crucial interest to all human beings: our work lives, our families and where we live. Each of the three units is written using one of the topics as a theme. We've done it this way because people learn more quickly and more deeply those things that are associated with important experiences in their lives.

Each unit includes one or more short works from respected authors of literature. We've used these to supplement the more traditional kinds of readings used in adult basic education classes, because we and our students wanted readings that had more than one layer, more than one dimension. The book was written for and tested by adult literacy students reading approximately at the fourth to sixth grade level. We are sure that students with higher grade levels would also benefit from using this resource.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

If you choose, you could go through this book following the directions, beginning at the front and ending at the back. We think it makes sense to do so because each section builds on the sections before it. But it makes more sense to follow the lead your students give you. If the majority of your students are retired and have no interest in rehashing their work lives, going through the section on work, step by step, would make no sense. The students might be interested in reading the selections but not in learning how to apply for a job. If the subject of families catches their imaginations, you may never get to the other chapters. You might find other readings and create other activities until you and your students have evolved a study process of your own that surpasses this book.

It is our wish that literacy teachers use this book as an example. We hope it is an example of at least two things. First, it takes student interest as a starting place to create lessons. The themes of work, families and home are ones that have surfaced over and over as highly charged for our students. We assume these themes are highly charged for all of us. Secondly, this book asks students to stretch. You can see how the materials ask the reader to stretch comprehension skills, reading skills and perceptions of the world. Some of the readings or activities might be too long a stretch for some classes, and we hope the teachers will modify what we've written accordingly. But we also hope that teachers don't underestimate what their students can do in a challenging situation with the affectionate support of a teacher who is also a good friend. Give it a try. Also give your students enough time to master a story or an activity. Some groups could speed through the first comprehension activity based on the work quotes. Other groups might take hours of study to ferret out their meanings. We expect that teachers will adjust this resource to fit their classes' reading level, experience with critical thinking, and preferred pace.

After you have finished this book, we hope you will continue to teach by creating lessons and choosing material based on student themes. We would be delighted to hear about your progress. When enough materials are collected, a sequel could be published. Write us if you have any questions or need support. Good luck.

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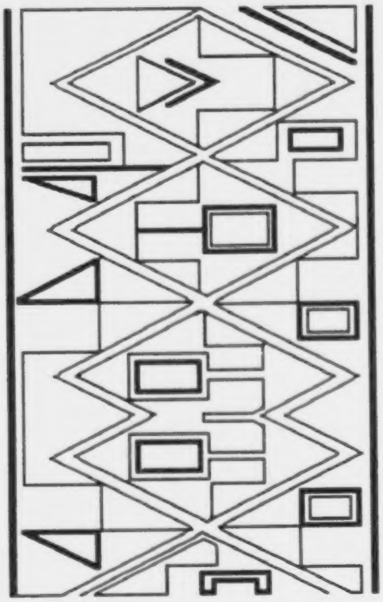
CHAPTER ONE: WORK



REFLECTING ON OUR OWN EXPERIENCE

A. BRAINSTORM

l. Have students make a list of all the different kinds of work they have done - paid or unpaid. (Suggest activities such as caring for children, cleaning house, gardening, fixing their cars, etc.) Dictionaries can be used to help with spelling.

2. Students read their lists aloud. (Other class members may want to add new items to their lists as the readings remind them of things.)

B. DISCUSS

Students discuss experiences with jobs. Ask them to tell stories about a boss or about landing a specific job. If someone has never worked, ask them to tell about someone else's job. If the teacher has the resources, the stories can be recorded for transcription and returned to the students to be read at the next session.

C. BRAINSTORM

1. Students should pick out one job from their list that they liked and/or did well, and write:
    - the skills that were necessary and
    - why they like(d) the work.
2. Have students share aloud the reasons they gave for liking their work. Write the reasons on the board as students suggest them.
3. Allow students to examine their work list again and to pick out a job they did not like. As students share their reasons for not liking it aloud, write a new list on the board.

D. DISCUSS

Lead a discussion: In general, what kinds of work or jobs are good and why? What kinds of jobs are bad or unpleasant and why? (Possible subtopics: Who usually gets the good jobs? Who gets the bad ones?)

E. Write

Imagine a young person you know is thinking of applying for a job that you used to have and didn't like. Write a letter to that person and give him or her advice. Should the person take the job? If so, what should he or she watch out for, do, or avoid doing? Let students talk a little before they begin writing. They will need to have a specific young person and a specific job in mind. Put a model of a letter on the board so students can learn and use the format. Include the date, salutation, body and ending salutation with signature.

Reflecting on Other's Thoughts

A. Learning New Vocabulary

As preparation for reading the quotes on work that appear in the student book, explain to the students that you want them to become familiar with four words that appear below before they tackle the reading. (Check to see if these words are known or unknown to the students before teaching them. If you find additional words in the reading that think the students do not know, invent similar sentences and teach those words also.) Write the new word on the board, then read one of the following sets of sentences to the students. Ask the students to listen to the sentences and guess what the new word means. Give them a chance to discuss the answer among themselves after each sentence. If no one is able to guess, give them a definition and help them construct sentences with the new word until they are comfortable with it. If one person gets it, have her or him construct examples with you until the class can begin to make some of their own.

Dignity:	She is a proud woman and walks with dignity. He made it through the embarrassing situation by keeping his dignity. The deacon has the most dignity of anyone in our church.
Tilling:	Tilling the fields used to take all day, everyday. My grandfather used a mule and hand tools in tilling his field. The farmer sweated while tilling his field.
Sympathy:	I understand what he is going through and I have sympathy for him. The children felt sympathy for the girl who was punished. Since I had my baby, I feel sympathy for all pregnant women.
Kindred:	Once a year, all his kindred come to stay for a week-long reunion. My aunt is happy when she is with her children and her other kindred. We are so much alike; we are kindred spirits.

B. Read

1. Ask the students to turn to the handout, "WORK QUOTES." Read all the quotes and their authors' names aloud.

2. Pairs of students should choose or be assigned one quotation. (Preferably, the quotations chosen will relate in some way to issues raised by the student in the previous discussion.) One at a time, students read their quotes again to the class. Help the students explain the meaning briefly. If the students have trouble, paraphrase it for them.

C. WRITE

Ask the students to write a paragraph telling what they think of the quote. What does it make them think about or remind them of? Why do they agree or disagree with this quote?

D. DISCUSS

Students read these paragraphs to the class. Discuss the ideas raised, as appropriate.

PUTTING THE READING IN CONTEXT

A. RESEARCH

1. Bring a set of encyclopedias to class, or if that's not possible, take the class to a library. If your students are not familiar with encyclopedias, hand out volumes randomly and ask students to flip through and try to guess why and when people might use them. Discuss encyclopedias in general and show students how they are organized.

2. Using the encyclopedias as a resource, students (or student pairs) should locate the information on the author of their quote. (Each author should be in a separate volume except for the two Roosevelts.) Help students open their volume to the correct page.

3. Pick students to read aloud each of the questions on the worksheet.

4. As other students work, spend individual time with each one in turn, answering questions and/or quietly reading aloud together.

5. Continue the reading and working time as long as seems appropriate. Then have students read their worksheet answers aloud.

Work Quotes

Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.

Theodore Roosevelt

There is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem.

Booker T. Washington

Women, as well as men, were given minds to use and the ability to develop skills in various ways...For real satisfaction, every human being must earn his living.

Eleanor Roosevelt

The law of work does seem utterly unfair, but there it is and nothing can change it; the higher the pay in enjoyment the worker gets out of it, the higher shall be his pay in cash also.

Mark Twain

As a cure for worrying, work is better than whiskey.

Thomas Edison

The strongest bond of human sympathy, outside of the family relation, should be one uniting all working people of all nations and tongues and kindred.

Abraham Lincoln

WORKSHEET ON WORK QUOTES

1. Name of author ____________________

2. Where was he or she born? ____________________

3. In what year was he or she born? ____________________

4. When did the author die? ____________________

5. List any headings or titles given in the article about this person. Put an * by any title that has to do with the person's work.

____

____

____

____

____

6. What kinds of work did this person do? ____________________

____

____

7. What is this person's main "claim to fame"? ____________________

____

____

8. Give at least one interesting fact or story about this person. ____________________

____

____

____

B. READ ABOUT LITERATURE

Ask students to turn to the section on "Literature and History." Have students take turns reading paragraphs aloud. Check comprehension with literal questions such as: What was the novel, The Jungle, about? In what period was it written? What was the public reaction to the novel? What about the play, Waiting for Lefty? What is its subject matter? When was it written? What were some problems of workers during the Great Depression?

LITERATURE AND HISTORY

Some works of art and literature have had a great public impact. Some have even brought changes in American history. The next two readings both have historical importance. Both of them concern problems of working people. Both were written at times when working conditions were poor for many American workers.

The first reading is from a novel called **The Jungle**. The author, Upton Sinclair, was very concerned about the social problems of his day. He and others who wrote about these problems were often called "Muckrakers." They hoped their readers would do something to bring about change. (Sinclair's own involvement in social issues did not end with his books. He once ran for governor of California and almost won.)

The Jungle was published in l906. This was during a period called the Industrial Revolution, a time when old ways of doing things were being replaced by machines. Factories were springing up everywhere, especially in the eastern and mid-western U.S.

The lives of factory workers at that time were terrible. Men, women and even young children worked ten or more hours a day, six days a week. They still didn't earn enough to live on. There were no health and safety protections, and many workers died.

There were few protections for consumers either. Sinclair's descriptions of unsafe meat packing created a public scandal. President Theodore Roosevelt invited Upton Sinclair to the White House to discuss the matter. Important food safety laws were passed as a result.

The second reading is from a play titled **Waiting for Lefty** by Clifford Odets. It was written in l935 in the middle of the Great Depression. Again, this was a time of hardship and difficulties for American workers. As many as one in every three was out of work. Those who did have jobs often earned too little to meet their families' needs.

These problems helped bring about an increase in labor union activities. The 1930's were a time of strikes. Many new unions were formed. Like Sinclair, Odets hoped his writing would contribute to social change. He wanted to support the new unions.

Waiting for Lefty was about a taxi drivers' strike in New York City. The union leaders did not want the strike to happen. But during the play, Odets shows the reasons why a strike might be the best thing for workers to try. At the end of the first performance, the entire audience rose to their feet, yelling "Strike! Strike!" The excitement was electric. The play became a legend. Many people said it captured the spirit of the time.

C. PREDICTING AND DISCUSSION

1. Based on this introduction, have students write down two topics they might expect to learn about in the Sinclair and Odets pieces respectively. (Answers might include: problems of factory workers in the Industrial Revolution, unsafe meat packing, problems of workers in the Great Depression, the New York City taxi strike, etc.)

2. Encourage students to share other knowledge of the Industrial Revolution or the Great Depression. For the latter, in particular, this should include stories from family members (or possibly the students themselves). Have students talk about how their lives are similar or different from what's been described as Depression life. Pursue additional information in the encyclopedias as necessary to get discussion started. Be prepared for a discussion about the similarities between the Great Depression and the students' current lives.

D. READING

Ask students to turn to the readings from The Jungle and read them aloud as a class. Remind them to note whether the topics they wrote down earlier are, in fact, addressed in the reading.

The Jungle

Jurgis is the main character in the book. He and Antanas are both immigrants from Lithuania (a nation in northern Europe that is now part of the Soviet Union).

The novel is full of terrible stories of accidents and suffering and diseases and of rotten, poisonous meat that was packed up to be sold. The descriptions given here are bad, but they are not among the worst in the book.

Then there was old Antanas. The winter came, and the place where he worked was a dark, unheated cellar, where you could see your breath all day, and where your fingers sometimes tried to freeze. So the old man's cough grew every day worse, until there came a time when it hardly ever stopped, and he had become a nuisance about the place. Then, too, a still more dreadful thing happened to him; he worked in a place where his feet were soaked in chemicals, and it was not long before they had eaten through his new boots. Then sores began to break out on his feet, and grow worse and worse. Whether it was that his blood was bad, or there had been a cut, he could not say; but he asked the men about it, and learned that it was a regular thing--it was the saltpeter. Every one felt it, sooner or later, and then it was all up with him, at least for that sort of work. The sores would never heal--in the end his toes would drop off, if he did not quit. Yet old Antanas would not quit; he saw the suffering of his family, and he remembered what it had cost him to get a job. So he tied up his feet, and went on limping about and coughing, until at last he fell to pieces, all at once and in a heap, like the One-Horse Shay. They carried him to a dry place and laid him on the floor, and that night two of the men helped him home. The poor old man was put to bed, and though he tried it every morning until the end, he never could get up again.

Jurgis saw so plainly the meaning of it. In the beginning he had been fresh and strong, and he had gotten a job the first day; but now he was secondhand, a damaged article, so to speak, and they did not want him. They had got the best out of him--they had worn him out, with their speeding-up and their carelessness, and now they had thrown him away!

Excerpts from The Jungle by Upton Sinclair, published in l906.

This optional reading includes some of the most famous and most shocking passages of the book. It can be read to students to give a more accurate feeling for the bitter, graphic quality of the book if you wish. But it should not be included in the student reading assignment unless your class expresses a particular interest in the topic.

From ***The Jungle*** by Upton Sinclair:

Of the butchers and floorsmen, the beef-boners and trimmers, and all those who used knives, you could scarcely find a person who had the use of his thumb; time and time again the base of it had been bashed, till it was a mere lump of flesh against which the men press the knife to hold it. The hands of these men would be crisscrossed with cuts, until you could no longer pretend to count them or to trace them. They would have no nails - they had worn them off pulling hides; their knuckles were swollen so that their fingers spread out like a fan. There were men who worked in the cooking rooms, in the midst of steam and sickening odors, by artificial light; in these rooms the germs of tuberculosis might live for two years, but the supply was renewed every hour. There were the beef-luggers, who carried two-hundred-pound quarters into the refrigerator-cars; a fearful kind of work, that wore out the most powerful man in a few years. There were those who worked in the chilling rooms, and whose special disease was rheumatism; the time limit that a man could work in the chilling rooms was said to be about five years. There were the wool-pluckers, whose hands went to pieces even sooner than the hands of the pickle men; for the pelts of the sheep had to be painted with acid to loosen the wool, and then the pluckers had to pull out this wool with their bare hands, till the acid had eaten their fingers off. There were those who made the tins for the canned mean; and their hands, too, were a maze of cuts, and each cut represented a chance for blood poisoning. . .

Worst of any, however, were the fertilizer men, and those who served in the cooking rooms. These people could not be shown to the visitor, --for the odor of a fertilizer man would scare any ordinary visitor at a hundred yards, and as for the other men, who worked in tank rooms full of steam, and in some of which there were open vats near the level of the floor, their peculiar trouble was that they fell into the vats; and when they were fished out, there was never enough of them left to be worth exhibiting, --sometimes they would be overlooked for days, till all but the bones of them had gone out to the world as Durham's Pure Leaf Lard!

AFTER YOU READ

A. DISCUSS

Encourage students to express their reactions to the writing and to share personal experiences of poor working conditions on the job. Possible questions could include: What problems did Antanas and Jurgis face? Why do you suppose they put up with them? Have working conditions changed since The Jungle was written? In what ways? Have you faced similar safety problems in your own work? Are you or your family members immigrants? What were their first jobs in America like?

B. WRITE

1. Write a description of the work or working conditions on one of your jobs (or a job you heard described by older family members). The writing could describe aspects that were unsafe or unpleasant or could simply be a description of the work you were doing. If you can't think of anything specific, just describe a typical day on the job.

2. Have students read their paragraphs aloud.

3. Using student writing as a starting place, analyze possible courses of action to deal with unsafe working conditions. Suggested discussion questions: What did you do (could you and the other workers have done) to deal with those dangers on the job? What could the workers in the book have done? Keep the discussion moving with questions such as: Did that strategy work? (Do you think it would have worked?) Why or why not? What else could you/they have tried? If students do not bring up the issue of unions, ask if any of them ever belonged to unions or lived with people who did. Ask how unions did or did not solve problems on the job. Talk about the pros and cons of unions. (This discussion leads in to the next reading.)

PREPARING TO READ

A. UNDERSTANDING THE FORMAT OF A PLAY.

Ask students to turn to the reading from Waiting for Lefty. First explain the format in which plays are written: the name of the character speaking is given, followed by the lines to be read. (The names are not read aloud. They merely tell you who is supposed to say this line. Read a line or two as an example.) The words in italics and parentheses are stage directions. They tell the characters things they are supposed to do while the lines tell them what they are to say. Remind students that this is just one scene from the play.

B. REVIEW

Review other information given about the play in the introductory reading from "Literature and History." Remind students to look at the notes they made on topics that might be covered in this reading.

C. Focus for Reading

As students read the scene, underline all the insults that Joe and his wife say to each other. (These will figure in a later exercise.)

DIFFICULT OR UNUSUAL WORDS:

palooka - a stupid, clumsy person
racketeer - gangster
chariot - a carriage (here it is used to mean a taxi)
rickets - childhood disease that deforms the bones (caused by poor diet)
flivver - a beat-up old car

WAITING FOR LEFTY by Clifford Odets,
the scene titled "Joe and Edna"

NOTES: The scene is a dialogue between a cab driver and his wife. Lefty Costello is a union member who is trying to organize a strike. He is the person named in the title of the play.

SECTION 1

A tired but attractive woman of thirty comes into the room, drying her hands on an apron. She stands there sullenly as JOE *comes in from the other side, home from work. For a moment they stand and look at each other in silence.*

JOE: Where's all the furniture, honey?

EDNA: They took it all away. No installments paid.

JOE: When?

EDNA: Three o'clock.

JOE: They can't do that.

EDNA: Can't? They did it.

JOE: Why, the palookas, we paid three-quarters.

EDNA: The man said read the contract.

JOE: We must have signed a phoney . . . .

EDNA: It's a regular contract and you signed it.

JOE: Don't be so sour, Edna . . . *(Tries to embrace her.)*

EDNA: Do it in the movies, Joe--they pay Clark Gable big money for it.

JOE: This is a helluva house to come home to. Take my word!

EDNA: Take MY word! Whose fault is it?

JOE: Must you start that stuff again?

EDNA: Maybe you'd like to talk about books?

JOE: I'd like to slap you in the mouth!

EDNA: No, you won't!

JOE *(sheepishly)*: Jeez, Edna, you get me sore some time . . .

SECTION 2

EDNA: But just look at me--I'm laughing all over!

JOE: Don't insult me. Can I help it if times are bad? What the hell do you want me to do, jump off a bridge or something?

EDNA: Don't yell. I just put the kids to bed so they won't know they missed a meal. If I don't have Emmy's shoes soled tomorrow, she can't go to school. In the meantime let her sleep.

JOE: Honey, I rode the wheels off the chariot today. I cruised around five hours without a call. It's conditions.

EDNA: Tell it to the A & P!

JOE: I booked two-twenty on the clock. A lady with a dog was lit . . . she gave me a quarter tip by mistake. If you'd only listen to me--we're rolling in wealth.

EDNA: Yeah? How much?

JOE: I had "coffee and--" in a beanery. *(Hands her silver coins.)* A buck four.

EDNA: The second month's rent is due tomorrow.

JOE: Don't look at me that way, Edna.

SECTION 3

EDNA: I'm looking through you, not at you. . . Everything was gonna be so ducky! A cottage by the waterfall, roses in Picardy. You're a four-star-bust! If you think I'm standing for it much longer, you're crazy as a bedbug!

JOE: I'd get another job if I could. There's no work--you know it.

EDNA: I only know we're at the bottom of the ocean.

JOE: What can I do?

EDNA: Who's the man in the family, you or me?
JOE: That's no answer. Get down to brass tacks. Christ, gimme a break, too! A coffee and java all day. I'm hungry, too, Babe. I'd work my fingers to the bone if--

EDNA: I'll open a can of salmon.

JOE: Not now. Tell me what to do!

EDNA: I'm not God!

SECTION 4

JOE: Jeez, I wish I was a kid again and didn't have to think about the next minute.

EDNA: But you're not a kid and you do have to think about the next minute. You got two blondie kids sleeping in the next room. They need food and clothes. I'm not mentioning anything else--But we're stalled like a flivver in the snow. For five years I laid awake at night listening to my heart pound. For God's sake, do something, Joe, get wise. Maybe get your buddies together, maybe go on strike for better money. Poppa did it during the war and they won out. I'm turning into a sour old nag.

JOE (defending himself): Strikes don't work!

EDNA: Who told you?

JOE: Besides that means not a nickel a week while we're out. Then when it's over they don't take you back.

EDNA: Suppose they don't! What's to lose?

JOE: Well, we're averaging six-seven dollars a week now.

EDNA: That just pays for the rent.

JOE: That is something, Edna

EDNA: It isn't. They'll push you down to three and four a week before you know it. Then you'll say, "That's somethin'" too!

SECTION 5

JOE: There's too many cabs on the street, that's the whole damn trouble.

EDNA: Let the company worry about that, you big fool! If their cabs didn't make a profit, they'd take them off the streets. Or maybe you think they're in business just to pay Joe Mitchell's rent!

JOE: You don't know a-b-c, Edna.

EDNA: I know this--your boss is making suckers outa you boys every minute. Yes, and suckers out of all the wives and the poor innocent kids who'll grow up with crooked spines and sick bones. Sure, I see it in the papers, how good orange juice is for kids. But damnit our kids get colds one on top of the other. They look like little ghosts. Betty never saw a grapefruit. I took her to the store last week and she pointed to a stack of grapefruits. "What's that" she said. My God, Joe--the world is supposed to be for all of us.

SECTION 6

JOE: You'll wake them up.

EDNA: I don't care, as long as I can maybe wake you up.

JOE: Don't insult me. One man can't make a strike.

EDNA: Who says one? You got hundreds in your rotten union!

JOE: The union ain't rotten.

EDNA: No? Then what are they doing? Collecting dues and patting your back?

JOE: They're making plans.

EDNA: What kind?

JOE: They don't tell us.

EDNA: It's too damn bad about you. They don't tell little Joey what's happening in his bitsie witsie union. What do you think it is--a ping pong game?

JOE: You know they're racketeers. The guys at the top would shoot you for a nickel.

EDNA: Why do you stand for that stuff?

JOE: Don't you wanna see me alive?

EDNA *(after a deep pause)*; No . . . I don't think I do, Joe. Not if you can lift a finger to do something about it, and don't. No, I don't care.

JOE: Honey, you don't understand what--

EDNA: And any other hackie that won't fight . . . let them all be ground to hamburger!

JOE: It's one thing to--

EDNA: Take your hand away! Only they don't grind me to little pieces! I got different plans. *(Starts to take off her apron.)*

SECTION 7

JOE: Where are you going?

EDNA: None of your business.

JOE: What's up your sleeve?

EDNA: My arm'd be up my sleeve, darling, if I had a sleeve to wear. *(Puts neatly folded apron on back of chair.)*

JOE: Tell me!

EDNA: Tell you what?

JOE: Where are you going?

EDNA: Don't you remember my old boy friend?

JOE: Who?

EDNA: Bud Haas. He still has my picture in his watch. He earns a living.

JOE: What the hell are you talking about?

EDNA: I heard worse than I'm talking about.

JOE: Have you seen Bud since we got married?

EDNA: Maybe.

JOE: If I thought . . . *(He stands looking at her.)*

EDNA: See much? Listen, boy friend, if you think I won't do this it just means you can't see straight.

JOE: Stop talking bull!

EDNA: This isn't five years ago, Joe.

JOE: You mean you'd leave me and the kids?

EDNA: I'd leave you like a shot!

JOE: No . . .

EDNA: Yes! *(Joe turns away, sitting in a chair with his back to her.)*

JOE *(finally)*: Well, I guess I ain't got a leg to stand on.

EDNA: No?

SECTION 8

JOE *(suddenly mad)*: No, you lousy tart, no! Get the hell out of here. Go pick up that bull-thrower on the corner and stop at some cushy downtown. He's probably been coming here every morning and laying you while I hacked my guts out!

EDNA: You're crawling like a worm!

JOE: You'll be crawling in a minute.

EDNA: You don't scare me that much! *(Indicates a half inch on her finger.)*

JOE: This is what I slaved for!

SECTION 9

EDNA: Tell it to your boss!

JOE: He don't give a damn for you or me!

EDNA: That's what I say.

JOE: Don't change the subject!

EDNA: This is the subject, the exact subject! Your boss makes this subject. I never saw him in my life, but he's putting ideas in my head a mile a minute. He's giving your kids that fancy disease called the rickets. He's making a jelly-fish outa you and putting wrinkles in my face. This is the subject every inch of the way! He's throwing me into Bud Haas' lap. When in hell will you get wise--

SECTION 10

JOE: I'm not so dumb as you think! But you are talking like a red.

EDNA: I don't know what that means. But when a man knocks you down you get up and kiss his fist! You gutless piece of boloney.

JOE: One man can't--

EDNA *(with great joy)*: I don't say one man! I say a hundred, a thousand, a whole million, I say. But start in your own union. Get those hack boys together! Sweep out those racketeers like a pile of dirt! Stand up like men and fight for the crying kids and wives. Goddamnit! I'm tired of slavery and sleepless nights.

JOE *(with her)*: Sure, sure! . . .

EDNA: Yes. Get brass toes on your shoes and know where to kick!

JOE *(suddenly jumping up and kissing his wife full on the mouth)*: Listen, Edna, I'm goin' down to 174th Street to look up Lefty Costello. Lefty was saying the other day . . . *(He suddenly stops.)* How about this Haas guy?

EDNA: Get out of here!

JOE: I'll be back! *(Runs out. For a moment* EDNA *stands triumphant.)*

READ

1. If possible make a tape with friends or co-workers of the scene. Play the tape as students read along. You can also read the play yourself changing your voice to indicate different characters.

2. The scene is broken into sections for the purpose of this lesson (it was not written that way). Assign one student to read Edna's part and one to read Joe's for each section. You could assign another student to read all the stage directions or you could read them yourself. Be sure students know who's responsible, in any case, and remind them that the directions would not be read in an actual play production. Instead, you would see those things acted out on stage.

3. At the end of each section have students answer the following comprehension questions (a few answers and cues are given, in parentheses).

(1) What happened to the family's furniture? Why is Edna angry?
What does she do when Joe tries to embrace her? (What does she mean by, "Do it in the movies, Joe"?)

(2) What do they need money for?
How much did Joe make that day? Why couldn't he make more?

(3) What did Edna expect out of her marriage?
What did she get?
Do you think Joe deserves a "break"? Is he really trying?
What does Edna mean when she says, "I'm not god"?

(4) What does she mean when she says, "I lay awake listening to my heart pound"?
She says her Poppa went on strike during the war and won. Which war would that have been? (World War I)
Why does Joe object to a strike? (Give two reasons.)

(5) What health problems do the children have?
Why doesn't their child know what a grapefruit is?
What does Edna mean when she says, "The world is supposed to be for all of us"? (It shouldn't be that some people get everything and others almost nothing, etc.)

(6) Why does Edna think Joe's union is rotten?
Why doesn't Joe want to do anything about it?

(7) Who is Bud Haas?
What does Edna threaten to do?

(8) Who is Joe Mitchell? (He is the character in this scene.)
The fight is really getting hot now. What insults do they throw at each other?

(9) There are two "subjects" being fought over here. What are they?
How are they related? (Why does Edna say, "This is the subject"?)
Whom does Edna hold responsible for the family's problems?

(10) Look at the line, "When a man knocks you down you get up and kiss his fist."
Is Edna justified in saying this about Joe?
What does she want Joe to do?
How does Joe change? (He decides to support the strike.)

AFTER YOU READ

A. CHECKING UNDERSTANDING

Have a student summarize the scene just read. Afterward, give them this information on the rest of the play: The scenes that follow show why other taxi drivers support the strike. Throughout the play, Joe and the others are waiting for Lefty Costello, who they know is a pro-strike activist, to help them get the strike organized. At the end of the play, Lefty is found dead with a bullet through his head. All the workers then decide to strike on their own.

B. DEEPENING UNDERSTANDING

Then move into a discussion of the scene/play in general: (If your particular students have not had much experience in unions, consider modifying or skipping this section.)

- Do you think going on strike was a good idea for Joe and the other taxi drivers? Why or why not?
- Do you think they would have been successful? Why? What do you know about strikes in the 1930s. (Elicit any family stories.)
- Who do you suppose killed Lefty? (The corrupt union officials are clearly implicated by the play.)
- Do you think unions have helped workers in the past? Do you think they help workers today?
- Have you ever participated in a strike? What was it like? Looking back, was it a good strategy?
- What options do today's workers have for improving their lives?
- Could a conversation like Joe's and Edna's take place between a husband and wife today? Why or why not?

C. WRITE

Write a dialogue, using the format of the drama (give the name of the speaker in capital letters, followed by a colon, and then write the words that the person would say). Write a conversation you have heard or make one up. Some suggestions include: a discussion you heard at work, an argument with a family member, a conversation you wish you had with your boss, etc.

D. FOCUS ON LANGUAGE

1. Exercise on figures of speech:

   (a) Have students go through the play and look at the underlined insults. Share lists aloud until all examples are given.

   (b) Review the meaning of the terms "metaphor" and "simile." Have students identify each example of metaphors and similes in the insults they have noted. Review these as a class.

   (c) Then have students make up insults using at least five metaphors and five similes of their own. (You're as rotten as what's stuck to the bottom of my garbage can . . whatever.) Handle this as a lighthearted activity. Some students may not want to participate if it's taken too seriously or lasts too long.

2. Punctuation of direct and indirect quotes:

   (a) Introduce the next activity by explaining that dramatic literature (plays) uses a special form to show dialogue. Most writing shows it another way, using quotation marks. Explain to the students that they will learn to use quotation marks to show dialogue.

   (b) Give an example by rewriting the first two lines of the scene on the board, as follows and explain that the meaning is essentially the same:

   "Where's all the furniture, honey?" asked Joe.
   Edna answered, "They took it away. No installments paid."

   (c) Have a student or students come to the board and circle all the new punctuation marks added when the lines were rewritten in this format.

   (d) Ask students to work in pairs, or as a group for less experienced students. Explain that they need to come up with three or so rules for converting play dialogue to dialogue with quotation marks. Visit each pair and help them look for what is different between the play format and the quotation format. After the student pairs have reported what they wrote down, discuss the reports to make sure all of the following are discovered:

      1) Write the name of the speaker and the word "said" (or a synonym) before or after the quote.
      2) Put quote marks at the beginning of what is said.
      3) Put quote marks at the end of what is said.
      4) Put a comma before the quote marks if the speaker's name is before what he or she said.

Do not re-word students' rules if they are substantially correct. For instance rule 2 and 3 could be combined, and the order will certainly be different. They may take a completely different approach, but if their rules will help them correctly construct quotes, then they are correct.

If students have not studied punctuation before or recently, you might want to teach them the names of the punctuation marks used in this exercise.

(e) Assign students to pick any six lines of the scene and rewrite the dialogue using quotation marks. They can work alone or in pairs and then copy examples onto the blackboard. Work with examples until the process is understood by everyone. If writing is still very difficult for your students, this exercise might be too time consuming for them. If so, you can provide written examples of speech in play format that the students can then proofread. Ask them to transform the play format to quotation format by crossing out and adding words and punctuation marks. For board work you can write the speech in play format and with an eraser and chalk the students can transform it to a quotation format.

LIFE SKILLS I

The following are activities for developing job-hunting skills. Select according to student needs and interests.

1. Ask students to turn to "Assessing Job Skills" (from Washington State Employment Security). Read aloud as a class and complete the activities.

   (a) Distribute copies of a local job application form. Have students fill out the form, using information put together in the previous job-related activity.

   (b) Have each student read one job description aloud and allow other students to comment on clarity and accuracy (did the student give a clear and confident picture of the job experience?)

   (c) Suggest that students develop a full resume of all experience that might be useful on a job application. Allow students extended time (including home assignment, if appropriate) to complete it.

   (d) Students should pair up and give comments on each others' work experience record.

   (e) The teacher may also choose to review and critique each record, since it can be a valuable tool for students in the job-hunting process.

WORKSHEET FOR ASSESSING JOB SKILLS

Before you begin a job hunt, it is important to be aware of your attributes as a working individual. Think of yourself as a product. You may have an assortment of fantastic qualities, but unless you can effectively communicate them, an employer will not know these good things about you.

Then, take some time to carefully analyze yourself. This pamphlet has been designed to help you do just that. It is a worksheet for your personal assessment. By answering questions carefully, you will have outlined the skills you posses. This worksheet can help you effectively communicate these skills to an employer.

VALUES

Everyone has values in terms of life style, goals, and activities. If you can determine your values, you'll be able to make intelligent decisions abut the kind of work you would most like to do.

Here are some questions to consider:
What kind of working environment do you prefer? ____________________

What kind of values are the most attractive to you: wealth, glamour, power, prestige, variety, security, service, achievement, creativity? ____________________

Which rewards are most valuable to you? ____________________

What are your goals for the next year? Five years? Ten?____________________

If you could have any job, what would it be? What do you really want to do?__________

Do you prefer working with people? Data? Ideas? Things? A combinations of these? In what order of importance?____

____

____

____

____

If your answer was people, how do your see yourself relating to them: supervising, servicing, instructing, informing, counseling, cooperating, competing?________________

____

____

____

____

What are you striving for?____

____

____

____

____

Look at the answers you have given to the **Values** questions. They should give some clues to the kind of work most suited to you. You will be happier and achieve a greater amount of satisfaction if the job you get is compatible with your career preferences and ideals.

SKILLS

The term "skills" is often misunderstood. We sometimes think of skills as specifically defined trades. But skills in the broader definition of the word means activities which you are good at, or enjoy doing. We have all developed a number of skills.

For example, parents may not feel that years of raising children have provided much in the way of skills. Often though, parents have simply not been thinking about the skill they have learned.

Raising children requires several talents: the ability to pay attention to more than one thing at a time, to cook, to organize time, to clean houses, and all of these are marketable skills. With some careful thought, any activity you have participated in can be viewed in terms of the skills which were necessary to successfully complete it.

THINK

On the top of the next page, make a list of ten things you have accomplished in your life – things of which you are proud, activities you have participated in which make you feel really good about yourself.

1.____

2.____

3.____

4.____

5.____

6.____

7.____

8.____

9.____

10._______________________________________

Now, examine the ten and see if any pattern emerges. Try to pinpoint your areas of success. What are the things you do well? What do you enjoy doing the most? (Caution: these are two different questions.)

Translate your strength into skills. What do you perceive your strongest skill to be? Your next strongest? Make a list of your skills. Select five of them beginning with the strongest and moving to the least strong. Do the same with the activities you enjoy the most. Hopefully, there will be some parallels between what you do well and what you enjoy.

Now you have begun to see yourself in positive terms. You have made a list of your assets--qualities which make you unique. By presenting yourself to an employer in terms of positive skills, it becomes easier to sell yourself into the job. You are convincing the employer that you are a valuable commodity to the organization.

EXPERIENCE

Any time you try for a job, you'll be asked about your previous work experience. It is important to know exactly what you have done, not just in terms of job titles, but in terms of actual work accomplishments.

On another page, list all of your work and volunteer experiences. Don't stop at a title; include a full description of your responsibilities and accomplishments on the job.

Which jobs have you enjoyed the most? Why?

What skills were necessary to successfully perform these jobs?

Which jobs have you enjoyed the least? Why?

ANALYZE

Analyze your experiences carefully. Take a look ahead. Which job activities would you like to include in your future career? Which job activities would you prefer to avoid in your future career?

HOBBIES

Your spare-time activities can give a great deal of information about you. Don't ignore hobbies. The things you have done outside of work are valuable indications of skills and interests. Make a list of your favorite hobbies:

Now, number them from greatest enjoyment to least enjoyment.

ANALYZE:

What were you doing?

What skills were you using?

What results did you accomplish?

These lists should help to pinpoint the skills you enjoy using the most and reveal where your interests lie. Both of these will be important factors in your employment decision.

EDUCATION

The amount and type of education you have received will obviously make a difference in the jobs you will eventually obtain.

List all of the educational experiences you have had. Don't forget special workshops, conferences, clinics, etc.

After you have analyzed yourself in terms of values and the skills you possess, list,in order of your preference, the types of jobs you feel you would like and for which you are best qualified. If you need help in answering this section, an excellent source of information about various types of jobs is the Occupational Outlook Handbook. This handbook gives the latest information on more than 800 occupations. For each, it tells about the work involved, where the jobs are located, what training and other qualification are needed to fill them, and the chances for advancement. It also discusses earnings and working conditions, and assesses future job opportunities for people in the field. And, it tells you where to go for more information about any occupation of particular interest to you. The Handbook is available at most Washington State Employment Security Job Service Centers, your local library, or college placement centers.

You have completed a self-analysis. You have pinpointed your successful attributes. Keep this worksheet handy. It will be useful the next time you go for a job interview, fill out an application, write a resume, or plan for future careers. Because you know why you are unique, and are confident about your skills, you will have an easier time convincing an employer that you should be hired.

2. Ask students to turn to "Researching the Job Market." Read aloud as a class. Then complete one or more of the following activities:

a. Make a list of people or places you might contact to try to find work.

b. Practice finding and reading announcements in the want ads. (Materials: several want ad sections of the local newspaper.)

(i) First use the Classified Index to find the appropriate pages.
(ii) Then have students make a list of job titles they might be interested in (e.g. secretary, welder, part-time work, etc.).
(iii) Find where these jobs would be listed. Read any advertisements for that position.
(iv) Then have the student identify which of these listings suits their needs, wants and qualifications.
(v) Students should also explain the next step(s) in trying to obtain these jobs.

c. Practice using the Yellow Pages to identify companies that might hire workers who are like the students.

(i) First identify the type of business (e.g. shipyard, department store, etc.).
(ii) Then find these listings in the Yellow Pages. Students can write down the names and addresses of employers they might contact.

d. Practice reworking job descriptions/applications to fit the requirements of specific jobs. For example, which of your skills and experience would be particularly important on this job? How can you emphasize these skills in your job description? For example, look at the complete resume you put together. Select out those skills and experiences that have the most relevance to this job.

e. Role play job interviews.

f. Make up a job experience description for Joe or Antanas in the readings completed earlier.

RESEARCHING THE JOB MARKET

from Job Service, Washington State Employment Security Department

There are no short-cuts in job hunting, and job hunting is one of the most difficult tasks in life. After you have taken the time to assess your job skills and know the type of job you want, you can begin to look for a job that will use those skills. You need to research the job market to find available jobs. Since relatively few jobs are advertised, this can be a time consuming process.

Several sources of information and ways to gather information about job openings are available to you. Use all of them. Remember, job finding success is proportional to how many different sources a job hunter uses. The more used, the greater likelihood of finding the job you want.

Keep a record of your job hunt in a systematic manner. Remember all job contacts. Here are some ideas for gathering information and some places to look for specific job opportunities.

PEOPLE YOU KNOW

Your first source of job information will probably be friends, neighbors and relatives. Most people find out about their jobs through someone they know. Tell people you are looking. Tell them twice. You want them to remember you when they hear of job opportunities. Through their work or social contacts, they may know of opportunities that are not normally listed with regular sources. Follow up leads immediately.

DOOR-TO-DOOR APPROACH

One of the most effective job hunting methods is personally knocking on the door of the person who has the power to hire. There is simply no substitute for the personal meeting between prospective employer and you, the potential employee.

Tell the employer you would like to talk to him/her about future employment. It is impossible for anyone to say, "We're never going to have any future openings." Get suggestions about other places to call and get permission to use that person's name as a referral. Then you may say to the new contact, "Mr. Smith of Taylor Tool Company suggested I talk to you."

You should research for information about the organization before you make a visit, and while there, seek more information. (See Researching for More Information.)

You will be nervous the first couple of times you go door-to-door. Everybody is. The more people you visit, however, the more confidence you will gain.

THE STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

The Washington State Employment Security Department has more job listings in more occupational categories than any other single source in the state.

Job placement services are available through a statewide network of approximately 30 Job Service Centers (JSCs) and their satellite offices. And, if you are thinking about moving out of state, there are approximately 2,500 job service centers conveniently located in all parts of the country. The job service centers operate computerized job banks in all major cities and many smaller ones to bring up-to-the-minute information on new job openings. No fee is charged for their services in helping you find a job.

In addition to placement service, the job service centers have local, state and national labor market information. Career counseling and aptitude/proficiency testing are also available. And ask about employment programs for persons with special needs, such as veterans, older workers or persons of disability. Check the phone directory under Washington State for the office nearest you.

WANT ADS

Another course worth exploring are the employment advertisements appearing in newspapers, trade magazines and professional journals. Don't delay with want ads; check them the moment they are available. If you see a promising ad, follow up on it immediately. Follow directions. If the ad says "call", call; if it says "appear in person", appear, don't call.

CIVIL SERVICE

A civil service job means working for the city, county, state or the federal government. Check with civil service commissions in your area. They are the sources of information regarding a wide range of professional, technical, clerical, crafts or service jobs in government. Jobs are filled on a merit basis as determined by the results of examinations and ratings of experience and education. No fees are charged.

PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES

You may want to try using the services of a private employment agency in your job search. Agencies charge a fee to either the applicant or the employer when a job placement is made.

OTHER SOURCES

Make a list of possible employers by using the telephone book or a business or industrial directory from your area to get the names, addresses and telephone numbers of organizations you feel can use your talents. Check with the Chamber of Commerce for any employer lists they might have.

This is, of course, a broad listing. As you find out more about the organizations, you can decide which ones fit you best, and take the others off the list. The only expense to you is the effort made on your part.

RESEARCHING FOR MORE INFORMATION

Researching should be a major part of any job hunt. It is important to look closely at prospective employers. An individual in a position to hire will be more impressed with your talents if you know about the organization before you apply and are interviewed. Researching is a way to prepare yourself for interviews and to gain the knowledge necessary to make wise employment decisions.

After you have narrowed down the list of employers to those organizations in which you are interested, research for more information. Find out the names of persons in key positions. Note what the organization does, its size, its image and perhaps its budget. All employers are looking for someone to solve problems and enhance the organization. Try to determine what some of its problems might be and envision how you would work to solve them. If you can convince an employer you have the ability to help solve those problems, you are almost assured of getting the job.

INTERVIEWING FOR INFORMATION

A good way to learn about an organization and its problems is to interview for information. Set up an appointment with someone in a responsible position at the organization you would like to explore. Try to see someone who works in an area that interests you. Stress that you are not asking for a job right now, but that you do need advice and would like some information about the organization. Ask questions. What kinds of needs do you have as an organization? How do people break into the system? Are your programs expanding? Where do you see the company ten years from now? Everyone likes to be asked for advice. Chances are you will find most people willing to talk and fun to talk to. Send a thank-you note after your discussion and attach a copy of your resume. Maybe you will be remembered the next time there is an opening.

Remember too, that just as an employer is searching out capable persons, you are looking for an organization which will suit your employment needs. You will be more satisfied in a situation compatible with your values, where your skills can be used to the fullest extent.

THINKING OF MOVING?

If you are thinking about moving to a different city to find a job, it's wise to gather some information about your new location. Use Chamber of Commerce materials for general facts on businesses in the area. Read the local newspapers. Who is doing what? Where? Check the yellow pages for a list of employment possibilities. Talk to the people who live there: By exploring employment options with them, you gather information and at the same time make valuable contacts.

LIFE SKILLS II

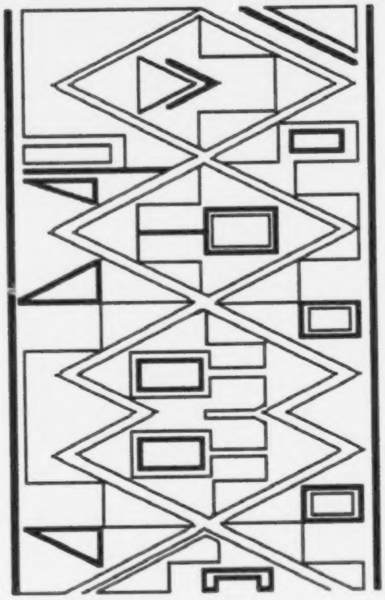
Possible work-related reading activities for students who are currently working and not looking for work.

I. Encourage students to bring in things they would like to be able to read that would help them do a better job - or get a better job - at work. Work on these in class as appropriate.

2. It is possible that the earlier discussions might have raised current concerns of students about workplace problems they would like to address. Encourage them to bring to class a copy of their union contract or workplace policies. Read through relevant sections and discuss what the student can do about the problem.

OR: Read the contract/policies and make a hypothetical analysis of what the fictional characters, Joe or Antanas, could have done if they had been covered by these rules.

CHAPTER TWO: FAMILIES



REFLECTING ON OUR OWN EXPERIENCE

A. DRAW TO START DISCUSSION

Begin with something different. Instead of writing, ask each student to use marking pens and paper to DRAW A PICTURE of his or her family. (The teacher or tutor should complete this exercise too!) Make sure all students feel welcome to define "family" however it is meaningful to them. They may include as many people in the drawing as they wish.

B. DISCUSS

Have students share and explain their drawings. Hopefully, this will suggest some further discussion openers, for example:

- What did the pictures make you think about?
- Do you have any questions or observations for your fellow artists? Did you notice anything interesting?
- I see a lot of you included children (grown children, aged family members, grandchildren - whatever is appropriate here) in your drawings. Do you help care for these family members? What is that like for you?

(Help students to see that the object of the discussion is NOT psychoanalysis, sociology, or art criticism, but just to get a conversation going in a fun way.)

2. (Transition to writing) Review how dialogue is represented in cartoons: the words appear in bubbles over the character's head. Suggest that students add dialogue to their drawings in this way. Think of something that each family member says often, or is likely to say. Add these sayings to your picture, using cartoon-like "bubbles." (The teacher/tutor could give an example on her/his drawing to start.) Share examples informally. Discuss if appropriate. (This should be fun!)

C. WRITE

1. Refer back to the scene from Waiting for Lefty and review the way that dialogue is presented there. Have students write a dialogue between one or more family members using this format. (This may begin with what students have written on the cartoon or not, as they prefer.)

2. When complete, have students read the dialogue as though they are actors performing a play. (If necessary, review how this is done, using the Waiting for Lefty scene as an example.) Allow the author of the dialogue to choose which class members will read each part.

3. Next, writing a line or two of student dialogue on the board as an example, review the format for writing dialogue in standard prose, using quotation marks. (For example, a line originally written: HENRY: No way! I'm not gonna do that! would change to: Henry said, "No way! I'm not gonna do that!") Have a student volunteer rewrite at least one line of dialogue in this way on the board.

D. ADD FEELING TO WRITING

1. Note that more feeling can be given to the quote by:
   - using a more expressive verb (e.g. Henry shouted, mumbled or gasped . . . instead of simply Henry said)
   - adding an adverb (e.g., Henry said angrily . . .)

Have students suggest similar possible modifications to the lines written on the board.

2. Have students rewrite their original dialogue in the new format, incorporating some of the descriptive kinds of language just discussed.

READING ABOUT OTHERS' EXPERIENCES 1

(NOTE: This discussion is oriented toward students who are parents and/or concerned about parenting issues. If your class has expressed stronger interest in adult family relationships you may prefer to skip to the story on page 53.)

A. BRAINSTORM

I. If you completed the jobs unit, students probably mentioned some parenting duties among the types of work they have done. Review a couple of examples. Then allow 5 - 10 minutes for a brainstorm in which students list as many things as possible that parents do for their children. (If some class members don't have children they care for, encourage them to give examples from their own childhood experiences.)

2. Have students read their lists aloud. (Make notes, for yourself, of listed items that relate to this lesson.)

B. DISCUSS

1. Give examples from students' lists that have to do with teaching children appropriate social/moral behaviors – how to act in their communities. Ask for suggestions about what this entails and how parents can teach their children these values/behaviors (e.g., by modeling behavior themselves, punishing misbehavior, etc.).

2. Ask students for examples of situations in which they learned important morals/values lessons from their own parents or taught them to their children. Call attention to the difficulties or conflicts that arose. Present this as the subject of the next reading.

3. Ask students if they remember any times when children had something to teach their parents. Have they ever taught their parents something important or have they learned something new from their children? Explain that this is also the subject of the next story.

C. LEARN VOCABULARY

1. Teach the word "reproach" if it is not known by your students by having them read and interpret the following sentences:

> My mother saw me take the last piece of pie and gave me a reproaching look. (maybe someone in the class can mimic that kind of look and the students can discuss the meaning of such a look.)
>
> He is unpleasant to be around because he reproaches everyone for small mistakes.
>
> He was drinking again and his wife's face was full of reproach.
>
> She was mean but no one reproached her for it because they were afraid of her.
>
> I didn't do the right thing but my friend never reproached me for it.

Have the students list ways in which someone could reproach someone else.

2. Create similar exercises for words you believe will be new to your students and are not easily understood from context (e.g., fragile,overtly, alibi, excessive).

D. READ

1. Pre-read: Ask students to turn to “You Wouldn't Understand.” Read it aloud to the students first.

2. Focus for reading: Explain that this story is about a parent and a child who have things to teach each other. Direct the students to read to see who teaches whom.

3. Comprehension:
   a. Have each student read a few paragraphs in turn, stopping after each change in readers to ask a few key comprehension questions, for example:

   - Who are the two characters on the first page? (a young girl and her father)
   - Who is telling the story? (the girl's father)
   - What time of day is it? (late evening)
   - Why might mushrooms grow overnight? (because it has just rained)
   - This girls asks a lot of questions. Name some. Does this give you an idea of how old she probably is?

- Does the father answer all of her questions? Why not? (He says she wouldn't understand, but maybe he finds it just too difficult.)
- What does the father see in the grove of trees? (10-12 boys beating another)
- Does he do anything to stop it? Why not? Does he feel guilty about this? - How does the little girl react?
- What does the policeman tell us?
- The writer says that he, his daughter, and the victim were the only three people affected by what happened. How were they affected? Why was everyone else indifferent (they didn't care)?

b. Look up the word "overtly." When the author says the world might overtly be a jungle, he is implying that it is already a jungle; only we just can't see it? Do you think life in today's big cities is like a jungle? In what way? What does he mean by, "the park was advancing on the city"?

(*NOTE*: In discussion with our students, we learned that it is important to handle the race elements of this story with thoughtfulness. African American students can be made to feel uncomfortable if the issue is overemphasized, especially in a class where the Black/white ratio is unbalanced. Some students may relate strongly to the theme and respond well to developing it as a chapter in itself. Follow the lead of the students, watching responses.)

YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND by Jose Pacheco

She took my hand as we crossed the street, and I felt the dampness of her palm.

"I want to play in the park for a while."

"No. It's too late. We have to get home; your mother is waiting for us. Look, there's nobody else around. All the little children are home in bed."

The street light changed. The cars moved forward. We ran across the street. The smell of exhaust dissolved into the freshness of grass and foliage. The last remnants of rain evaporated or were absorbed by the sprouts, leaves, roots, nervations.

"Are there going to be any mushrooms?"

"Yes, I guess so."

"When?"

"Well, I guess by tomorrow there should be some."

"Will you bring me here to see them?"

"Yes, but you'll have to go to bed right away so you can get up early." I walked too quickly, and the child had to hurry to keep up with me.

She stopped, lifted her eyes, looked at me to gain courage, and asked, slightly embarrassed, "Daddy, do dwarfs really exist?"

"Well, they do in stories."

"And witches?"

"Yes, but also just in stories."

"That's not true."

"Why?"

"I've seen witches on TV, and they scare me a lot."

"They shouldn't. Everything you see on television is also stories with witches-made up to entertain children, not scare them."

"Oh, so everything they show on TV is just stories?"

"No, not everything. I mean . . . how can I explain it to you? You wouldn't understand."

Night fell. A livid firmament fluted with grayish clouds.* In the garbage cans, Sunday's refuse began to decay: newspapers, beer cans, sandwich wrappers. Beyond the distant drone of traffic, raindrops could be heard falling from the leaves and tree trunks onto the grass. The path wound through a clearing between two groves of trees. At that moment, the shouts reached my ears: ten or twelve boys had surrounded another. With his back against the tree, he looked at them with fear but did not scream for help or mercy. My daughter grabbed my hand again.

"What are they doing?"

"I don't know. Fighting. Let's go. Come on, hurry up."

The fragile pressure of her fingers was like a reproach. She had figured it out: I was accountable to her. At the same time, my daughter represented an alibi, a defense against fear and excessive guilt.

We stood absolutely still. I managed to see the face- the dark skin reddened by white hands- of the boy who was being festively beaten by the others. I shouted at them to stop. Only one of them turned around to look at me, and he made a threatening, scornful gesture. The girl watched all of this without blinking. The boy fell, and they kicked him on the ground. Someone picked him up, and the others kept slugging him. I did not dare move. I wanted to believe that if I did not intervene, it was to protect my daughter, because I knew there was nothing I could do against all twelve of them.

"Daddy, tell them to stop. Scold them."

"Don't move. Wait here for me."

Before I finished speaking, they were already running quickly away, dispersing in all directions. I felt obscenely liberated. I cherished the cowardly hope that my daughter would think they had run away from me. We approached. The boy rose with difficulty. He was bleeding from his nose and mouth.

"Let me help you. I'll take you . . . "

He looked at me without answering. He wiped the blood off with the cuffs of his checkered skirt. I offered him a handkerchief. Not even a no: disgust in his eyes. Something--an undefinable horror--in the girl's expression. Both of their faces were an aura of deceit, a pain of betrayal. He turned his back on us. He walked away dragging his feet. For a moment I thought he would collapse. He continued until he disappeared among the trees. Silence.

"Let's go. Let's get out of here".

"Why did they do that to him if he wasn't doing anything to them?"

"I guess because they were fighting."

"But there were lots of them."

"I know. I know."

"They're bad because they hit him, right?"

"Of course. That's the wrong thing to do."

The park seemed to go on forever. We would never reach the bus. We would never return home. She would never stop asking me questions nor I giving her the same answers they undoubtedly gave me at her age.

"So, that means he's good?"

"Who?"

"The boy the others made bleed? Or is he bad too?"

" No, no. The others are the bad ones because of what they did."

Finally we found a policeman. I describe to him what I had just witnessed.

"There's nothing to be done. It happens every night. You did the right thing by not interfering. They are always armed and can be dangerous. They claim the park is only for whites and that any dirty nigger who steps foot in here will suffer the consequences."

"But they don't have the right, they can't do that."

"What are you talking about? That's what the people in the neighborhood say. But when it comes down to it, they won't let blacks come to their houses or sit in their bars."

He gave the child an affectionate pat and continued on his way. I understood that cliches like "the world's indifference" were not totally meaningless. Three human beings – the victim, my daughter, myself – had just been dramatically affected by something about which nobody else seemed to care.

I was cold, tired, and felt like closing my eyes. We reached the edge of the park. Three black boys crossed the street with us. No one had ever looked at me like that. I saw their switchblades and thought they were going to attack us. But they kept going and disappeared into the grove.

"Daddy, what are they going to do?"

"Not let happen to them what happened to the other one."

"But why do they always have to fight?"

"I can't explain it to you, it's too difficult, you wouldn't understand."

I knelt down to button up her coat. I hugged her gently, with tenderness and fear. The dampness of the trees encircled us. The park was advancing upon the city and again – or overtly – everything would be jungle.

*This sentence describes the color of the night sky:
livid - black and blue, purplish
firmament - sky, heavens
fluted - rippled

E. DISCUSS

When you feel that students understand the basic information in the story, continue with the following discussion:

- What did the child think the father should do? How did she show it?
- Do you think the father did the right thing? Why or why not?
- How do you think his decision not to interfere will affect his daughter?
- What would you have done in his place? Have you experienced similar situations yourself? What happened? How did the experience affect you?
- Do parents have a responsibility to take certain actions – to help people in need, for example – as a way of showing their children how to behave? How far does this responsibility go? Can you think of important examples in your own community? What can (or should) parents do about problems such as drugs in the neighborhood?

FOCUS ON THE ELEMENTS OF STORIES

A. LOOK FOR THE ELEMENTS

l. Introduce discussion by making the following points and soliciting student examples:

(a) The last story centered on a conflict in the mind of the parent. He had a decision to make. What was it? (Whether to interfere and try to stop the beating of the black boy.)

(b) Conflicts and decisions are at the heart of literature. They are what make stories interesting, exciting, and moving. You can find conflict in just about every story and poem in this course, as well as in movies, television dramas, other stories and plays, etc. Can you suggest some examples?

Examples from previous readings might include:

- Waiting for Lefty scene reveals conflicts between Joe and Edna, between Joe and the union, etc.
- The Jungle explores many facets of the ongoing conflict between factory owners and workers, consumers, etc.
- conflict between the tenant and the landlord in Langston Hughes' poems: tenant wants his place fixed; landlord doesn't want to fix it, just wants the rent (Chapter Three)

The way that the conflicts and decisions get worked out are central to the PLOT of the story.

2. Ask: Can you think of other things, other elements that are common to the literature you've seen in this class and in other stories you've read? Write suggestions on the board as students give them.

B. DEFINE THE ELEMENTS

Introduce the following concepts, taking off from student suggestions. Write each key element on the board in columns, beginning with Plot, and continuing with:

CHARACTERS

Introduction: There may not be characters in poems, but you find them in virtually all short stories and novels, even if the characters are animals or space aliens.

Questions/activities: Who are the characters in the story, "You Wouldn't Understand?" What do we know about them? List on the board all the information students can find about the girl and her father, the boys in the park, the one who is being beaten up, etc. Ask, "How is this information presented?" (through description and dialogue; identify examples of each.) Point out that students did this in the family dialogues they wrote; they gave the rest of the class an idea of the person' s character through dialogue and description.

SETTING

Questions/activities: Where and when does the story we just read take place? (Note that not too much specific information is given and that it really doesn't matter; the situation could have taken place in many different settings. It has, in fact, a universal quality.) Point out that in some stories, setting is much more important; remember that The Jungle and Waiting for Lefty, for example, were very closely related to a specific time and place. (This is not to say that they don't have meaning today; only that the setting is important to understanding the work.)

THEME

Some stories have a very strong meaning or point of view. Bible stories are an example, certainly. In other stories, it is not so obvious, but some kind of theme is generally there.

C. WORK WITH THE ELEMENTS BY WRITING

1. Introduce the worksheet (page 45) as a way to add other elements of a story to the family dialogue that students wrote. Discuss each question orally first, so that students have an idea of how they might answer each question. Allow time for the class to fill in the worksheets.

2. Collect completed worksheets. Use one as an example of how a story could be written using dialogue already written and adding some of the material on the worksheet. For example, you might want to start with the setting, move into the dialogue, and end with "the moral of the story." (For example, It was 9:00 on a Tuesday night and Henry still had not started his homework. His mother called angrily, "Henry! Aren't you going to do this work of yours?" Henry replied, "No way! I'm not gonna do it." . . . That boy better be careful or he'll turn out just like his father!")

3. Have students rewrite their dialogues, adding one or more items from the worksheet. The result need not be a finished piece but should just help students become a little more aware of the elements that go into stories. (Students can fictionalize or embellish their writing as much as they want.)

4. Have students read their writing aloud. Discuss as appropriate (e.g. What did you learn from trying this? Was it hard? Why or why not?)

WORKSHEET - FAMILY STORIES FROM CONVERSATIONS

CHARACTERS; Who are your characters? Name them and write at least two sentences to describe each one.

SETTING: Where and when might this conversation take place? What does the setting look like?

PLOT: What events might lead up to this conversation? What might happen because of it? What might the characters do to each other?

THEME: Does your story have a lesson or underlying meaning? What is it?

D. PUBLISH

If the project is successful, consider typing up the stories (with or without the accompanying drawings) and publishing copies in a binder for students to have and for other classes to use.

READING ABOUT OTHERS' EXPERIENCES II

A. RESEARCH

1. Write the words "myths" and "legends" on the board, letting students know that the next reading will involve examples. Draw a circle around the words and ask the students to tell you everything they remember that relates to the words. Write these ideas on the board and circle them also. Discuss with the students how to draw lines among the circles in logical way to show the relationships among the ideas. (This is called “Mind Mapping” and can be used for any vocabulary work. An example appears in the activities for the Landlord Tenant Law in the chapter on housing. Have the students use dictionaries to develop an understanding of the meaning of these terms.

2. For homework, have students ask a friend or relative to tell them stories that are myths or legends. The students can bring them to class in oral or written form.

3. Students may use encyclopedias and other references to develop a broader historical background for the reading.

B. DISCUSS

Some points to make might include:

- Every culture has myths or legends that express information of importance and interest to members of that culture. They are an important part of the artistic and literary heritage of those cultures.
- Myths and legends are oral art forms; many have been written down later, but they began as spoken stories.
- Many great writers have incorporated myths or legends from earlier times or cultures into their work.

C. READ

1. Introduce reading and ask students to turn to the myths. The myths of ancient Greece, which were written down as early as 1,000 years before Christ (and retold aloud long before that) have had a strong presence in English literature. The story of Oedipus is one of the best known of Greek mythology.

2. Ask general comprehension questions to be sure that students have understood the story.

THE MYTH OF OEDIPUS

King Laius of Thebes had just heard terrible news. The priest at Delphi had predicted that Laius would be killed by his son. The predictions from Delphi were never wrong.

Laius was determined to avoid this fate. So when a son was born, he gave the baby to a servant, saying, "Carry this child away and kill him." However, the boy's mother, Queen Jocasta, intervened. She bribed the servant and told him not to kill the baby but just to leave him in the desert. "Perhaps," she hoped, "someone will find my son and save him."

This is what happened. A shepherd happened by and found the baby. He took the boy to Corinth and presented him to the king and queen. King Polybus of Corinth had no children. He and his wife were overjoyed to receive this baby, and they raised him like their own son. They named him Oedipus.

Oedipus grew up to be a brave, intelligent, and talented prince. When he was a young man, he decided to go to Delphi. It was common for noble young men to go there and hear predictions about their future. But the prediction that Oedipus heard was terrible! He would kill his own father and afterward kill himself. Oedipus never knew that King Polybus was not his natural father. He vowed that he would never return to Polybus so that the prediction would never come true.

Oedipus became a wanderer. One day, he traveled close to Thebes. A terrible monster, called a sphinx, was tormenting that city. It had the head of a woman, the body of a lion, and the wings of an eagle. The sphinx waited by the road into Thebes. To every traveler, she posed a riddle. Whoever could not answer it was killed. So far, no one had been successful, and many innocent people had died. Oedipus no longer cared if he lived or died. He decided to challenge the sphinx.

On the way to Thebes, he passed a nobleman and his servants. The road was too narrow for two chariots to pass. Someone would have to move out of the way. Both Oedipus and the nobleman were too proud to give way. Fighting broke out. One of Oedipus' horses was killed. Oedipus, in turn, killed the nobleman and all but one of his men. He later discovered that the nobleman he had killed was none other than King Laius! He had killed his true father, just as the predictions form Delphi had said.

But Oedipus did not know this yet. He traveled on and met the sphinx. This was her riddle: "What walks on four legs in the morning, two legs in the afternoon, and three legs at night?"

Oedipus thought a while and answered, "The answer is a man. As a child, I crawled on hands and knees, and that is four feet. I now walk on two legs, but an old man with a cane walks on three legs. Is this correct?"

The riddle had at last been answered. The sphinx screamed with rage and leaped over a cliff to its death. Oedipus was hailed as a hero. The people of Thebes soon learned that King Laius was dead, though they did not know how he had died.

They invited Oedipus to be their king. He accepted and married Jocasta, the widowed queen!

For a while, their kingdom prospered. Oedipus and Jocasta had several children and all seemed well. Then, mysterious hardships came to the land. Many people of Thebes lay dead. Oedipus sent for a famous seer - a man who had the power to see hidden truth. Piece by piece, the true story came out. Oedipus was the boy who had been left to die. He was the child of Laius and Jocasta. He had killed his father just as the predictions had said. He had married his mother and had children with her. This was the cause of the terrible things that were happening in Thebes.

Jocasta the queen killed herself when she heard this. Oedipus put out his eyes and became blind. Later, after a long and sorrowful time, he killed himself. The final prediction was fulfilled.

Pronouncing the Greek names and cities

People:
Jocasta - jo kas ta
Laius - la as
Oedipus - ed a pas
sphinx - sfinks

Cities:
Thebes - thebz
Delphi - del fi
Corinth - kor inth

D. DISCUSS

The following are two potential discussion topics:

a. Have you heard of the Oedipus story before? What have you heard? Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, claimed that all little boys have a secret wish to get rid of their fathers and have their mother's attention entirely for themselves. In your experience, is this true? Freud called this hidden pattern an "Oedipus complex." Was that a good name for it? Do you feel that this story says something true about the human condition in general or not?

b. Fate was a very important concept to the Greeks. How does fate figure in this myth? (What happened when characters tried to avoid their fate?) Do you believe, as the Greeks did, that our lives are plotted out for us in some way?

E. READ MORE MYTHS AND LEGENDS

Using students' suggestions or other reading materials, identify and read together some myths and legends from other cultures. Discuss ways that they are alike and ways that they are different. Relate the differences to known differences between the cultures that generated the myths.

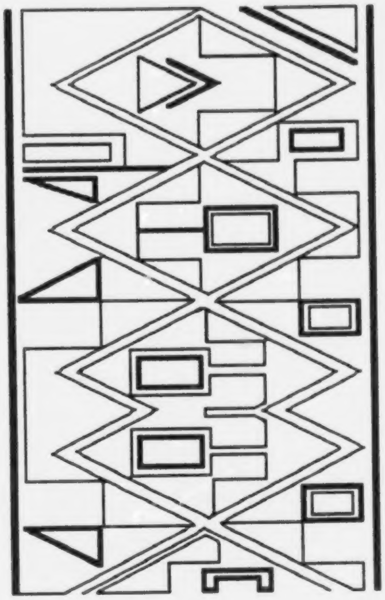
NOTE: If you haven't already completed Part III, use this myth as a basis to go back and complete that lesson, with the following modification:

> Instead of the introductory discussion on conflict, simply list – as students suggest them – the things that happened in this story and identify that as the PLOT. Then proceed with the rest of the discussion on the elements of fiction.

F. DEVELOP THE THEME

Ask students what other family issues they would like to read or write about. Find appropriate materials by checking at libraries. Select activities from those included in this book or invent other ones of your own.

CHAPTER THREE: HOUSING



REFLECTING ON OUR OWN EXPERIENCE

A. WRITE

1. Introduce topic of unit as housing, the places where we live. Begin with a writing assignment:

   What's the best place you ever lived and why? or

   What's the worst place you ever lived and why?

2. Allow time for writing; then have students read their pieces aloud.

B. DISCUSS

Encourage students to react to and discuss the writings, focusing on the emotional, financial, social, political importance of where we live.

REFLECTING ON OTHERS' EXPERIENCES I

A. WRITE

1. Ask students to turn to Langston Hughes' poem "Ballad of the Landlord."

2. Going around the class, have each student read one verse of the poem aloud. (The teacher might want to read the verse in italics.)

3. Check comprehension with questions such as: What happened here? (tenant threatened the landlord and was put in jail) Why didn't the tenant want to pay the rent? (the place had not been repaired - leaky roof, rickety stairs, etc.) What did she/he say to the landlord? (that she/he wouldn't pay rent, threatened to hit him) What did the landlord do? (called the police) What happened to the tenant? (put in jail)

Who is speaking in the first part of the poem? (tenant) How can you tell? (Content and also the language, the dialect used) Who is speaking in the verse written in italics? (The landlord--note the difference in language, dialect.) What do the next two short verses describe? (the tenant's experience as she/he is arrested and taken to jail) What do the lines written all in capital letters represent? (newspaper headlines)

"BALLAD OF THE LANDLORD", by Langston Hughes

Landlord, landlord,
My roof has sprung a leak.
Don't you 'member I told you about it
Way last week?

Landlord, landlord,
These steps is broken down.
When you came up yourself
It's a wonder you don't fall down.

Ten Bucks you say I owe you?
Ten Bucks you say is due?
Well, that's Ten Bucks more'n I'll pay you
Till you fix this house up new.

What? You gonna get eviction orders?
You gonna cut off my heat?
You gonna take my furniture and
Throw it in the street?

Um-huh! You talking high and mighty.
Talk on – till you get through.
You ain't gonna be able to say a word
If I land my fist on you.

Police! Police!
Come and get this man!
He's trying to ruin the government
And overturn the land!

Copper's whistle!
Patrol bell!
Arrest.

Precinct Station.
Iron cell.
Headlines in press:

MAN THREATENS LANDLORD

. . .

TENANT HELD NO BAIL

. . .

JUDGE GIVES NEGRO 90 DAYS IN COUNTY JAIL

B. DISCUSS

Explore the following areas:

- Was the landlord justified in calling the police? Why or why not? Didn't the tenant threaten him? Do you think the tenant's actions were justified?
- What do you suppose is the author's point of view? Is he more sympathetic to the tenant or the landlord? How can you tell?
- The landlord claims his tenant is "trying to ruin the government and overturn the land." Is this true? In what way is the tenant challenging the normal social order?

REFLECTING ON OTHERS' EXPERIENCES II

A. VOCABULARY

l. Ask students to turn to "Home" and the accompanying worksheet. Introduce the reading by pointing out that this describes very different attitudes and relationships toward one's living place than did the Langston Hughes poem.

2. Have students complete Part I of the worksheet. Review answers as a class and answer any questions about words in the exercise.

B. BEFORE YOU READ

Ask the students if they have ever said things they didn't mean. In what situations do people tend to say things they don't believe in or lie to themselves? Get examples. Ask the students what they do when something bad is about to happen to them. What do they do to get ready for it? Any examples? Explain that in this story the characters don't always say straight out how they feel. Ask student to read to see why.

C. READ

Teacher reads the story out loud.

HOME

by Gwendolyn Brooks

What had been wanted was this always, this always to last, the talking softly on this porch, with the snake plant in the jardiniere in the southwest corner, and the obstinate slip from Aunt Eppie's magnificent Michigan fern at the left side of the friendly door. Mama, Maud Martha, and Helen rocked slowly in their rocking chairs, and looked at the late afternoon light on the lawn, and at the emphatic iron of the fence and at the poplar tree. These things might be soon their no longer. Those shafts and pools of light, the tree, the graceful iron, might soon be viewed possessively by different eyes.

Papa was to have gone that noon, during his lunch hour, to the office of the Home Owners' Loan. If he had not succeeded in getting another extension they would be leaving this house in which they had lived for more than fourteen years. There was little hope. The Home Owners' Loan was hard. They sat, making their plans.

"We'll be moving into a nice flat somewhere," said Mama. "Somewhere on South Park, or Michigan or in Washington Park Court." Those flats were burdens on wages twice the size of Papa's. This was not mentioned now.

"They're much prettier than this old house," said Helen. "I have friends I'd just as soon not bring here. And I have other friends that wouldn't come down this far for anything, unless they were in a taxi."

Yesterday, Maud Martha would have attacked her . Tomorrow she might. Today she said nothing. She merely gazed at a little hopping robin in the tree, her tree, and tried to keep the fronts of her eyes dry.

"Well, I so know," said Mama, turning her hands over and over, "that I've been getting tireder and tireder of doing that firing. From October, to April, there's firing to be done."

"But lately we've been helping, Harry and I," said Maud Martha. "And sometimes in March and April and in October and even in November, we could build a little fire in the fireplace. Sometimes the weather was just right for that."

She knew, from the way they looked at her, that this had been a mistake. They did not want to cry.

But she felt that the little line of white, somewhat ridged with smoked purple, and all that cream-shot saffron, would never drift across any western sky except that in back of this house. The rain would drum with as sweet a dullness nowhere but here. The birds on South Park were mechanical birds, no better than the poor caught canaries in those "rich" women's sun parlors.

"It's just going to kill Papa!" burst out Maud Martha, "He loves this house! He lives for this house!"

"He lives for us," said Helen. "It's us he loves. He wouldn't want the house, except for us."

"And he'll have us,"added Mama, "wherever."

"You know," Helen sighed "If you want to know the truth, this is a relief. If this hadn't come up, we would have gone on, just dragged on, hanging out here forever."

"It might," allowed Mama, "be an act of God. God may just have reached down, and picked up the reins."

"Yes," Maud Martha cracked in, "that's what you always say – that God knows best."

Her mother looked at her quickly, decided the statement was not suspect, looked away.

Helen saw Papa coming. "There's Papa," said Helen.

They could not tell a thing from the way Papa was walking. It was that same dear little staccato walk, one shoulder down, then the other, then repeat, and repeat. They watched his progress. He passed the vacant lot, he passed Mrs. Blakemore's. They wanted to hurl themselves over the fence, into the street, and shake the truth out of his collar. He opened his gate – the gate – and still his stride and face told them nothing.

"Hello," he said.

Mama got up and followed him through the front door. The girls knew better than to go in too.

Presently Mama's head emerged. Her eyes were lamps turned on.

"It's all right," she exclaimed. "He got it. It's all over. Everything is all right."

The door slammed shut. Mama's footsteps hurried away.

"I think," said Helen, rocking rapidly, "I think I'll give a party. I haven't given a party since I was eleven. I'd like some of my friends to just casually see that we're home owners."

Worksheet for ***HOME***

PART I. Vocabulary and dictionary skills. The dictionary often lists several meanings for a word. Knowing how to use the dictionary means being able to pick out the right meaning for a particular sentence. All the answers below are true meanings for the underlined word. Circle the meaning that fits in the sentence.

I. They wanted this to last.

a. come at the end
b. go on for a long time
c. a wooden form for making shoes

2. The slip from Aunt Eppie's fern grew by the front door.

a. a slide
b. a woman's underskirt
c. a cutting from a plant
d. an escape

3. We're moving to a nice flat somewhere.

a. a box for fruit
b. low and smooth
c. a low marsh near a river
d. an apartment

4. They heard the rain drum with a sweet dullness.

a. a musical rhythm instrument
b. make a beating sound
c. get rid of
d. part of the brakes of a car

PART II: Powerful language in the story. What does the author mean by the following sentences and phrases?

l. the friendly door

2. shafts and pools of light

3. that same dear little staccato walk

4. Her eyes were lamps turned on.

5. The flats were burdens on wages twice the size of Papa's.

6. The birds in South Park were mechanical birds, no better than the poor caught canaries in those "rich" women's sun parlors.

7. ...the little line of white, somewhat ridged with smoked purple, and all that cream-shot saffron

8. They wanted to shake the truth out of his collar.

9. She tried to keep the fronts of her eyes dry.

10. God may have reached down and picked up the reins.

D. DISCUSS

1. Conduct a brief, factual discussion to check basic comprehension usine such questions as: Where did Papa go and what was he trying to do? Was he successful? Did the other family members expect that he would get the loan or not? What were they doing while Papa was off talking to the Home Owners Loan? (Take a statement such as "They talked about their feelings about the house and waited anxiously for Papa to return" as a transition to the next activity.)

2. Refer back to the pre-reading discussion about saying things you don't really mean and about getting yourself ready for bad events. Ask the students to talk about similar things they found in the story.

E. FOCUSING ON COMPREHENSION

1. Have students reread the story silently and mark all the things the family seems to like about the house and all the things they don't like. Note the items that are attributed specifically to Helen, Mama or Maud Martha.

2. Note these items briefly on the board in two columns ("like" and "don't like") as students suggest them (e.g., the tree, sound of the rain, etc.). Take as many suggestions as possible.

3. Discuss which of these had more meaning to the women – the things they liked or the things they didn't like? Why were they really talking about the things they didn't like? (To prepare themselves emotionally for the possibility of losing the house.)

F. FOCUS ON LANGUAGE

1. Turn to Part II of the student worksheet. This lists several examples of the poetic and powerful uses of language that enrich the story. Point out that many of these examples are powerful because of the way they compare or equate one thing to another. Encourage students to discover these relationships through questions such as:

   a. Read the first sentence. A door can't really be friendly, can it? What does the author mean here; what's another way of saying it? Just to say a "friendly door" really condenses a lot of words into one short phrase, and it's like making a sauce or stew; the more you cook it down, the stronger it gets.

   b. Review meaning of the words "shaft" and "pool." These things can't really be made of light. What does the author mean?

   c. "Staccato" is a word normally used for sounds, but here it is used more to describe a motion. What does it tell you about Papa's walk? (Students could speculate or even try to act it out.)

   d. In sentence 4, what two things are said to be the same? Do you find this a strong image? What does it tell you?

e. Sentences 5 & 6 describe one thing as being the same as another. What are they? Have students explain the meaning of each one.

Identify these as examples of metaphors. Write the term on the board. Explain that if one thing is just compared to another, using the word "like" or "as," for example, it is called a simile. There aren't any good examples here, although the comparison "no better than the poor caught canaries..." might qualify. If you haven't previously covered metaphors and similes, you may want to pause and spend some more time on them. (Examples can be light-hearted and colloquial: You're a pig! This place is a dump. He cried like a baby.)

f. Number 7 may have been difficult for students. Be sure they understand what is being described (the light in the sky seen from the back of the house, presumably at sunset--the "western sky"). Review the meaning of individual words. Note that the author has made up one word here – "cream-shot." try to describe what that means. Continue until students can picture the the sky. (You could try to paraphrase the meaning more awkwardly to make a point about the vividness of the language.)

g. The last three sentences aren't metaphors or similes but they introduce interesting concepts that enliven the writing. Have students explain what is really meant by each one (e.g., is it really the collar that knows the answer?) and discuss its impact.

2. Ask students to make a list of five things that they have in their homes. Work with one item at a time to create a metaphor as a class. Helpful questions might be: What is the door like? What animal does the couch remind you of? etc.

G. WRITE

Imagine that you have to leave the place where you are living now. What things would you miss? What things would you be happy to leave behind? Write a short description of your home keeping these things in mind. Be sure to include some specific details. Use at least three of the metaphors that you wrote and make up more if you need to.

H. USE OF LANGUAGE IN STORIES

(FOR STUDENTS WITH MORE READING EXPERIENCE)

1. Could you identify with these women? Did you get a strong sense of how they were feeling? How did the author manage to convey these feelings?

2. Have someone reread the last paragraph aloud. Ask about what Helen said earlier about her friends? (That she was embarrassed to have them come visit.) Do you think this was something she had expressed before? How can you tell? (This is suggested by the following lines, "Yesterday Maud Martha would have attacked her . . . .") So has Helen changed by the end of the story? In what way? (Now she feels pride and not embarrassment about their home.)

3. Note that although the story is very short, the author has managed to convey a lot of things, including a plot, a strong feeling for the setting, the personality of individual

characters, and a way of identifying with them. In part, this is done through the author's skilled use of language.

LIFE SKILLS

A. IDENTIFY STUDENT NEEDS

l. Housing and how important it is has been the theme for several days now. Ask for some aspects of housing that have involved reading.

2. List suggestions on the board as students give them. Discuss which topics would be most helpful to study.

B. POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES

Given here are suggested readings and activities on (a) the Washington State Landlord-Tenant Law (in five parts); (b) using the classified ads to find housing; and (c) reading home repair instructions. Select activities as appropriate, given student interests. Make up other ones as needed.

WASHINGTON STATE LANDLORD-TENANT LAW

LANDLORD'S RESPONSIBILITIES

THE LANDLORD SHALL:

1. Keep the place in decent condition and keep any common areas reasonably clean and safe.
2. Make sure the place complies with all codes, statutes and ordinances that affect the tenant's health or safety.
3. Provide for control of insects, rodents and other pests when they are not caused by the tenant. In single family places, provide for control of pests only at the beginning of the tenancy.
4. Maintain walls, doors, roof, etc. and keep the place in reasonably weather tight condition.
5. Maintain all electrical, plumbing, heating and other similar things that the landlord has put in the place.
6. Provide locks and keys to the tenants.
7. Provide garbage cans, and arrange for regular disposal of waste. In the case of single family places the tenant is responsible.
8. Provide reasonable heat and water for the tenant.
9. Let the tenant know the name and address of the person who is the landlord, in writing.
10. Notify the tenant by certified mail if the landlord changes. The notice must come right away.
11. Name someone in charge who lives in the same county, if the landlord lives out of state.

THE LANDLORD SHALL NOT:

1. Shut off a tenant's utilities on purpose.
2. Lock out a tenant.
3. Take a tenant's personal property unless the landlord has permission. The landlord must return the property.
4. Enter the place without proper notice except in emergencies.
5. Try to physically remove the tenant from the place.

TENANT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

THE TENANT SHALL

1. Pay the rent on the date required by the rental agreement.
2. Obey all reasonable rules which are explained when the tenant first moves in. Also obey rules that are made later after written notice by the landlord.
3. Comply with all city, county, and state rules and regulations.
4. Keep the place clean.
5. Dispose of all garbage in the proper way. Get rid of pests caused by the tenant.
6. Use all appliances supplied by the landlord properly.
7. Leave the place in as good condition as at the beginning except for normal wear and tear. The tenant will be responsible for any damages he/she has caused.

THE TENANT SHALL NOT:

1. Destroy, damage or remove any part of the place or its equipment on purpose orfrom neglect.
2. Permit a nuisance.
3. Be unreasonable about letting the landlord enter the residence.
4. Permit family or guests to destroy or damage property.

DISCRIMINATION

State law prohibits discrimination in housing based on race, creed, color, national origin, sex, or marital status. Violations should be reported to the office of the Washington State Human Rights Commission. Some local governments have passed additional laws to protect tenants from discrimination in housing.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS OF THE LAW

The landlord/tenant law covers several other topics, including repairs, rental agreements, deposits, evictions, tenants rights to privacy, and so on. For example:

> A tenant must always give the landlord written notice of a needed repair and allow him/her time to complete it (24 hours to begin repairs of heat, water, and life-threatening conditions, 2-30 days to begin other repairs). If the landlord does not comply, the tenant can often deduct the cost of small repairs from the rent.
>
> The landlord cannot retaliate (get even) against tenants for carrying out their rights under this law.
>
> Thirty days' written notice is required for changes in a month-to-month rental agreement, and 20 days' notice is required to end the agreement. There are a few exceptions, including:
>
> - if the landlord wants to make the apartment into a condominium or to exclude children (90 days notice required)
> - if the tenant has not paid rent (3 days' notice)

- if the rental agreement was violated (10 days notice)
- if the tenant has destroyed property, caused a nuisance, or conducted an illegal business in the residence (3 days' notice)
- if both parties agree to an earlier date

Any tenant who pays a deposit must receive:

- a written rental agreement
- a written checklist describing the condition of the place when the tenant moves in
- a receipt for the money paid
- a statement of exactly why the deposit may be withheld.

Tenants have the right to appear in court and explain their side before being evicted. (If the court decides the landlord is right, the tenant may have to pay damages and attorney fees.)

If a tenant fails to pay rent and abandons the place or shows that he or she plans to leave:

- the landlord may remove the tenant's property immediately (and may sell most of it after properly notifying the tenant)
- the tenant may have to pay additional rent

More complete information is available from the Seattle Tenants' Union, 3902 S. Ferdinand, Seattle, WA 98118, (206) 723-0500

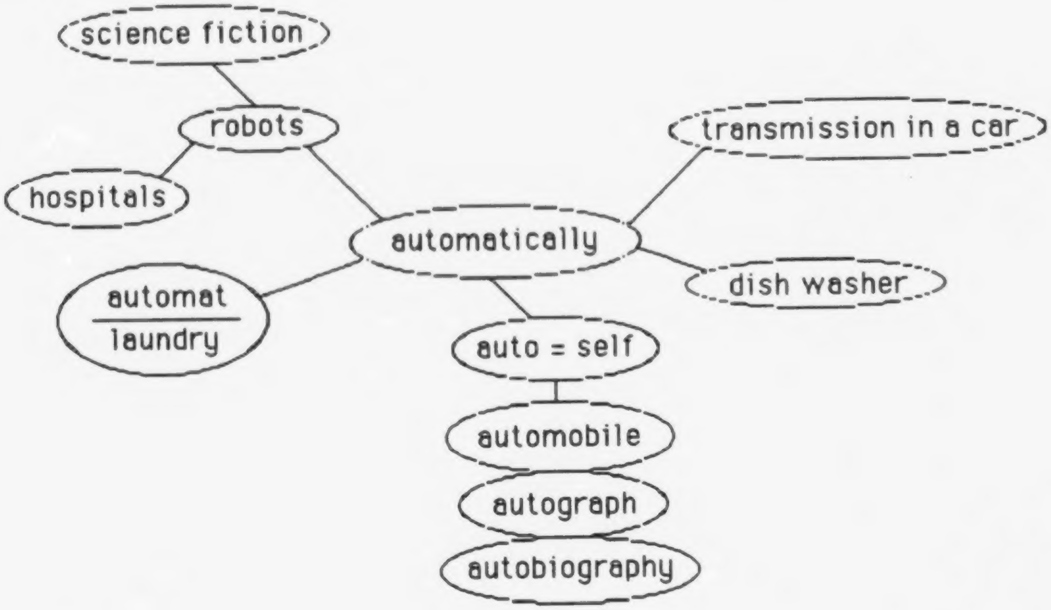
THE WASHINGTON STATE LANDLORD-TENANT ACT: SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

A. VOCABULARY

1. Ask students to turn to the reading for Part I - Landlord and Tenant Responsibilities - and the accompanying word list. These words may or may not be difficult for your students to understand. There may be more in the reading that you would want to add to this list. Before reading a section teach the words, one at a time in the following way: (codes, statutes and ordinances can be taught at one time because they are so similar).

2. Write the word on the board and circle it. Read the word and ask the students to tell you what they know about the word. As they speak, write key words on the board, circle them, and draw lines to connect them to the original words. This is a visual representation of what the word means to the students. The activity is called a "Mind Map."

3. If the students know nothing about the word, encourage dictionary searching and discussion. The teacher can add comments about the word as well. The idea is to build up as much familiarity with the word as possible, connecting it to ideas and information the students already have. An example is given below. The discussion that produced the "Mind Map" had student input, teacher input and dictionary information.


science fiction
robots
hospitals
transmission in a car
automatically
dish washer
automat
laundry
auto = self
automobile
autograph
autobiography

WORD LIST FOR LANDLORD-TENANT LAW

codes
statutes
ordinances
certified mail
attorney's fees
deduct
retaliation
condominium
marital status
residence

B. Read and Understand the Law

1. Teacher might want to begin by reading the list of landlord responsibilities aloud.

2. Assign each student one or more items from the list to read and explain to the class. They will be responsible for looking up unfamiliar words, figuring out the meaning of the statement, and trying to answer any questions that other students have about it.

3. Allow time for dictionary work and interpretation. The teacher should be available to provide help. Then have students read and explain their items in order, answering any questions about the items that arise.

4. Repeat the process for the tenant responsibilities section.

C. Applying the Law to Situations

1. Ask students to turn to the Landlord and Tenant Responsibilities Worksheet. Have students work in pairs to complete it. Discuss it as a class.

Worksheet for:
Landlord and Tenant Responsibilities

Using the handout *Responsibilities of Landlords and Tenants* as a guide, decide who is right and who is wrong in the two situations below. If possible, tell which numbered rules in the handout apply to the situations.

1) John lives in a run-down apartment house. A month ago his water heater broke, so now he has to heat water on the stove. The manager says it broke while John was living in the apartment, so he must fix it.

   In the basement, garbage is piling up because no one comes to pick it up. The hallways between apartments are a real mess. They haven't been cleaned in years. The manager argues that tenants must take care of their own garbage and keep the building clean. John doesn't think this is fair.

   John would like to complain to the landlord, but he doesn't know who he is, and the manager says it's none of his business.

   Who is right and why?

2) Ellen lives in an old house. The landlord is angry with her since she is a month behind on her rent. She doesn't want to pay the rent until the landlord puts a washer and dryer in the house.

   The landlord is also unhappy about T-Bone, Ellen's German Shepherd. He says he can't get near the house because the dog barks at him and that neighbors have complained about the dog. Ellen thinks that is just fine. She likes her privacy and the landlord shouldn't be coming by to bother her anyway.

   Who is right and why?

2. Ask students to reread "Ballad of the Landlord." How was the landlord not fulfilling his responsibilities? What rules can be cited? (Shall: 4, Shall not: 1, 2, 3, and 5.)

3. Have students mention real concerns about their own living situations. Determine as a class whether they are permissible or not under the law.

D. WRITE

Write a letter to your landlord (a) giving notice of a needed repair, or (b) giving notice that you plan to move out.

CLASSIFIED ADS

I. Gather copies of a local newspaper that carries classified housing ads, (enough to have one copy per student or student pair). Distribute to students. (If possible, distribute entire paper, or at least include the front page so that you can use the index, as noted below.)

2. Use newspaper index to find the classified advertising section.

3. Use classified index (if there is one) to find the housing rental section. Have students read aloud all the subheadings under rentals. Ask: If you were looking for housing, which headings would be of interest to you?

4. Have students glance through a number of listings under the column they have selected. Ask: What abbreviations are used in the ads? Write these on the board as students call them out and, as a class, figure out what they mean. Write down as many as students can find.

5. Discussion: If you are reading a paper with a lot of ads, it would take you a long time to read all the rental ads. What things can you do or look for that will help you sift through the list quickly? (Scan for the price, the number of bedrooms, etc.) Take all student suggestions. If they have none, suggest one and practice scanning.

6. Have students develop a list of characteristics they would be looking for in rental housing.

7. Singly or in pairs, have students take at least one column or subheading each to examine. Assignment: Mark the ads that fit your characteristics and pick out 2 - 5 that are most interesting or appealing to you.

8. Each student or pair should read their selections to the class and explain why these were chosen.

9. Question: Did anyone change their list of characteristics as they read through the ads? How and why? (For example, did they alter their expectations about price, location, decide they wanted a washer and dryer, etc.?)

10. Writing assignment: Write an ad describing your present living place. Be sure to give the heading under which it would appear.

READING HOME REPAIR INSTRUCTIONS

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

I. If students are interested in reading a guide to home repair/improvements, have them specify the projects they have in mind. Either the teacher or student should take responsibility for finding the appropriate information and bringing it to the next class. Sources include the library, bookstore, local utilities (for insulation, energy-saving and some other topics).

2. Make copies of the materials (or a part of them if they're long) for each student or student pair.

3. If the materials are difficult, the teacher can read them aloud to begin.

4. Assign one step of the process to each student or pair. They will be responsible for looking up any unfamiliar words, reading the section aloud, and explaining it to the class.

5. Discuss the entire process as a class. Do you think you could do this chore now that you have read an explanation of it? What parts were not clear? Can other students help explain or clarify these steps? Where might you go or whom might you ask for further information?

6. If appropriate, get a commitment from at least one student to go home and try it and report back on the results.

7. Writing assignment: Write the directions for carrying out some repair or maintenance chore around the house. Don't tell what the chore is. After everyone has finished, each student will read the description aloud and see if other students can guess what chore is being described.

Madam and the Rent Man

by Langston Hughes

The rent man knocked.
He said, Howdy-do?
I said, What
Can I do for you
He said, You know
Your rent is due.

I said, Listen,
Before I'd pay
I'd go to Hades
And rot away!

The sink is broke,
the water don't run,
And you ain't done a thing
You promised to've done.
Back window's cracked,
kitchen floor squeaks,
There's rats in the cellar,
And the attic leaks.

He said, Madam,
It's not up to me.
I'm just the agent,
Don't you see?

I said, Naturally,
You pass the buck.
If it's money you want
You're out of luck.

He said, Madam,
I ain't pleased!
I said, Neither am I.

So we agree!

NOTE: After completing the activities you have selected from the list above, you may want to undertake further explorations of housing issues (e.g., develop a history of housing in your community; develop a map of your community--what kinds of activities do or don't go on in your part of town and why; research current housing issues in the news; read and interpret graphs about housing in your community, etc.) The reading makes a good transition. It could also be studied on its own; suggestions are given for relating it to other readings included here.

A. READ

READ MORE LITERATURE- "MADAM AND THE RENT MAN"

1. Ask students to turn to the poem. Call attention to the definition and pronunciation of the word "Hades" (line 9).

2. Go around the room, each student reading one verse aloud in turn.

B. DISCUSS

Who is the "I" in this poem? (a woman who lives in the place) Who is the "he"? (an agent of the owner, come to collect the rent) What was wrong with this dwelling? What is the outcome this time? Did the woman go to jail as did the man in the earlier poem we read by Langston Hughes?

a. If you studied the landlord-tenant law, continue with the following line of questioning: Based on what you know about Washington State law, would this woman have to pay her rent? What could she do? Could the landlord evict her? How and why or why not?

b. If you did not read the landlord-tenant law materials but did carry out some of the other suggested activities, try this line of discussion: What would you do if you were in this woman's place? What do you think would be the consequences of this action? (This might be a reason to suggest that the class go ahead and study the readings on the law, so that they can learn what the true legal consequences might be.) Have you ever been in a situation like this yourself? What happened?

c. Would you call this a comic poem? Why? What makes it funny? What makes it serious?

C. IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS AND TAKING ACTION STEPS

Suggestions for using this as a starting place for further research:

- What is the housing in your community like; would you say there are lots of dwellings in as bad repair as the one described in this poem?

- What other issues related to housing are important in your community; where could you find information on them?

- Is anything being done about these problems in the community or local government? What?
- Are the housing issues in your neighborhood similar to those found in other parts of your city or are they different? What are the key differences and similarities? Why do you think these differences exist?

Goodwill Literacy
Adult Learning Center

The Goodwill Literacy Adult Learning Center is a community-based adult education program, serving the needs of Seattle's central/southeast community.

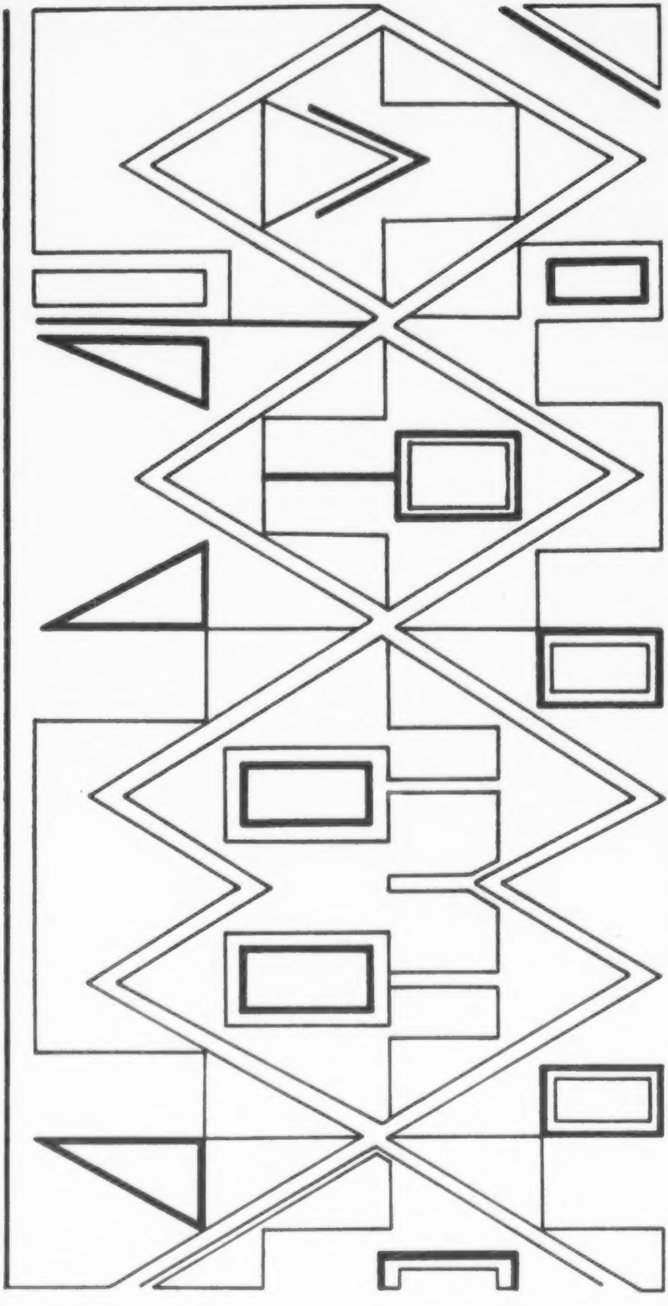
Starting with just five students in April of 1985, Goodwill Literacy has grown to serve over 250 adults each year. Initially providing only free one-to-one tutoring, the program has gradually shifted emphasis to small group instruction. Whether working one-to-one with a tutor or in a small cooperative class, each student works on his or her own goals. Goals may include helping a child through school, filling out job applications, reading for pleasure, writing an autobiography, understanding current events, or preparing for the GED exam. Themes addressed in the classroom often revolve around community issues such as AIDS, cancer, the public school system, drugs, political systems, and the history of African-American people.

At Goodwill Literacy Adult Learning Center, we define literacy in its broadest sense. We believe that not knowing how to read and write is primarily caused by social factors. Ultimately, the solution is to build a just society that values the potential contribution of each of its members, regardless of ethnicity, gender or social-economic position. The work of Goodwill Literacy is to help build that society by providing an opportunity for learning for those who have not had equal access to quality education or who have not been served well by traditional education institutions. We believe that by improving writing and reading skills, adults can increase their critical thinking, self-reliance, and willingness to effect change by becoming advocates for themselves and their community.

To order additional copies of Readings That Matter: A Literature and Life Issues Curriculum, request an order form from:

Goodwill Literacy
1400 South Lane Street
Seattle, WA 98144
(206) 329-1000 ext. 21

Readings That Matter



Student Manual

Readings That Matter

by
Ruth Pelz
and
Mallory Clarke

A literature and life issues curriculum for intermediate and advanced literacy students who want to read works by important authors that relate to life's important issues.

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INTRODUCTION

This book was written to help adult reading students. Three separate classes of new readers helped to create this book. These were students who are very much like you. We think this book helps students to read and write better, but also to think better about reading. It includes written works by well known and respected authors. These reading selections may be harder than some of the readings you have had before. You may want to have them read aloud to you first or you may want to re-read them several times before tackling the activities. You will find that these readings are more complicated than other readings, as well. We picked them because our students and teachers wanted to read something more challenging. They found that these selections had many layers of meaning and that they enjoyed finding out about the layers. We hope you enjoy using this book as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

Each chapter is based on a theme. These themes are work, housing and families. Most of the students we've known have been interested in these topics. The activities ask you to read, write and think about what you've read. Some of the activities are about understanding the reading selections, and some are about everyday life skills. If you would like to do a chapter on a different topic, suggest it to the teacher and the rest of the class. It might be possible to write another chapter together. If you do, write us and let us know what you've created.

Ruth Pelz
Mallory Clarke

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CHAPTER ONE: WORK

WORK QUOTES

Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.

Theodore Roosevelt

There is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem.

Booker T. Washington

Women, as well as men, were given minds to use and the ability to develop skills in various ways . . . For real satisfaction, every human being must earn his living.

Eleanor Roosevelt

The law of work does seem utterly unfair, but there it is and nothing can change it, the higher the pay in enjoyment the worker gets out of it, the higher shall be his pay in cash also.

Mark Twain

As a cure for worrying, work is better than whiskey.

Thomas Edison

The strongest bond of human sympathy, outside of the family relation, should be one uniting all working people of all nations and tongues and kindred.

Abraham Lincoln

WORKSHEET ON WORK QUOTES

Use the encyclopedia to find the following information about one of the authors of the quotes.

1. Name of author. . . . .

2. Where was he or she born? . . . .

3. In what year was he or she born? . . . .

4. When did the author die? . . . .

5. List any headings or titles given in the article about this person. Put an * by any title that has to do with the person's work.

. . . .

. . . .

. . . .

. . . .

6. What kinds of work did this person do? . . . .

. . . .

. . . .

7. What is this person's main "claim to fame?" . . . .

. . . .

. . . .

8. Give at least one interesting fact or story about this person . . . . . .

. . . .

. . . .

. . . .

. . . .

LITERATURE AND HISTORY

Some works of art and literature have had a great public impact. Some have even brought changes in American history. The next two readings both have historical importance. Both of them concern problems of working people. Both were written at times when working conditions were poor for many American workers.

The first reading is from a novel called **The Jungle**. The author, Upton Sinclair, was very concerned about the social problems of his day. He and others who wrote about these problems were often called "Muckrakers." They hoped their readers would do something to bring about change. (Sinclair's own involvement in social issues did not end with his books. He once ran for governor of California and almost won.)

The Jungle was published in 1906. This was during a period called the Industrial Revolution, a time when old ways of making things were being replaced by machines. Factories were springing up everywhere, especially in the eastern and mid-western U.S.

The lives of factory workers at that time were terrible. Men, women and even young children worked 10 or more hours a day, six days a week. They still didn't earn enough to live on. There were no health and safety protections, and many workers died.

There were few protections for consumers either. Sinclair's descriptions of unsafe meat packing created a public scandal. President Theodore Roosevelt invited Upton Sinclair to the White House to discuss the matter. Important food safety laws were passed as a result.

The second reading is from a play titled **Waiting for Lefty** by Clifford Odets. It was written in 1935 in the middle of the Great Depression. Again, this was a time of hardship and difficulties for American workers. As many as one in every three was out of work. Those who did have jobs often earned too little to meet their families' needs.

These problems helped bring about an increase in labor union activities. The 1930s were a time of strikes. Many new unions were formed. Like Sinclair, Odets hoped his writing would contribute to social change. He wanted to support the new unions.

Waiting for Lefty is about a taxi drivers' strike in New York City. The union leaders did not want the strike to happen. But during the play, Odets shows the reasons why a strike might be the best thing for workers to try. At the end of the first performance, the entire audience rose to their feet, yelling "Strike! Strike!" The excitement was electric. The play became a legend. Many people said it captured the spirit of the time.

THE JUNGLE

Jurgis is the main character in the book. He and Antanas are both immigrants from Lithuania (a nation in northern Europe that is now part of the Soviet Union).

The novel is full of terrible stories of accidents and suffering and diseases and of rotten, poisonous meat that was packed up to be sold. The descriptions given here are bad, but they are not among the worst in the book.

Then there was old Antanas. The winter came, and the place where he worked was a dark, unheated cellar, where you could see your breath all day, and where your fingers sometimes tried to freeze. So the old man's cough grew every day worse, until there came a time when it hardly ever stopped, and he had become a nuisance about the place. Then, too, a still more dreadful thing happened to him; he worked in a place where his feet were soaked in chemicals, and it was not long before they had eaten through his new boots. Then sores began to break out on his feet, and grow worse and worse. Whether it was that his blood was bad, or there had been a cut, he could not say; but he asked the men about it, and learned that it was a regular thing — it was the saltpeter. Every one felt it, sooner or later, and then it was all up with him, at least for that sort of work. The sores would never heal — in the end his toes would drop off, if he did not quit. Yet old Antanas would not quit; he saw the suffering of his family, and he remembered what it had cost him to get a job. So he tied up his feet, and went on limping about and coughing, until at last he fell to pieces, all at once and in a heap, like the One-Horse Shay. They carried him to a dry place and laid him on the floor, and that night two of the men helped him home. The poor old man was put to bed, and though he tried it every morning until the end, he never could get up again.

Jurgis saw so plainly the meaning of it. In the beginning he had been fresh and strong, and he had gotten a job the first day; but now he was secondhand, a damaged article, so to speak, and they did not want him. They had got the best out of him — they had worn him out, with their speeding-up and their carelessness, and now they had thrown him away!

Excerpts from The Jungle by Upton Sinclair, published in 1906.

WAITING FOR LEFTY
by Clifford Odets
the scene titled, "Joe and Edna"

NOTES: The scene is a dialogue between a cab driver and his wife. Lefty Costello is a union member who is trying to organize a strike. He is the person named in the title of the play.

DIFFICULT OR UNUSUAL WORDS:

palooka - a stupid, clumsy person
racketeer - gangster
chariot - a carriage (here it is used to mean a taxi)
rickets - childhood disease that deforms the bones (caused by poor diet)
flivver - a beat-up old car

Section 1

A tired but attractive woman of thirty comes into the room, drying her hands on an apron. She stands there sullenly as JOE *comes in from the other side, home from work. For a moment they stand and look at each other in silence.*

JOE: Where's all the furniture, honey?

EDNA: They took it all away. No installments paid.

JOE: When?

EDNA: Three o'clock.

JOE: They can't do that.

EDNA: Can't? They did it.

JOE: Why, the palookas, we paid three-quarters.

EDNA: The man said, "Read the contract."

Reprinted from WAITING FOR LEFTY by Clifford Odets, by permission of Grove Weidenfeld. Copyright 1935 by Clifford Odets; renewed c 1962 by Clifford Odets.

JOE: We must have signed a phoney . . . .

EDNA: It's a regular contract and you signed it.

JOE: Don't be so sour, Edna . . . *(Tries to embrace her.)*

EDNA: Do it in the movies, Joe — they pay Clark Gable big money for it.

JOE: This is a helluva house to come home to. Take my word!

EDNA: Take MY word! Whose fault is it?

JOE: Must you start that stuff again?

EDNA: Maybe you'd like to talk about books?

JOE: I'd like to slap you in the mouth!

EDNA: No, you won't!

JOE *(sheepishly):* Jeez, Edna, you get me sore some times . . .

Section 2

EDNA: But just look at me — I'm laughing all over!

JOE: Don't insult me. Can I help it if times are bad? What the hell do you want me to do, jump off a bridge or something?

EDNA: Don't yell. I just put the kids to bed so they won't know they missed a meal. If I don't have Emmy's shoes soled tomorrow, she can't go to school. In the meantime let her sleep.

JOE: Honey, I rode the wheels off the chariot today. I cruised around five hours without a call. It's conditions.

EDNA: Tell it to the A & P!

JOE: I booked two-twenty on the clock. A lady with a dog was lit . . . she gave me a quarter tip by mistake. If you'd only listen to me — we're rolling in wealth.

EDNA: Yeah? How much?

JOE: I had "coffee and — " in a beanery. *(Hands her silver coins.)* A buck four.

EDNA: The second month's rent is due tomorrow.

JOE: Don't look at me that way, Edna.

Section 3

EDNA: I'm looking through you, not at you . . . Everything was gonna be so ducky! A cottage by the waterfall, roses in Picardy. You're a four-star-bust! If you think I'm standing for it much longer, you're crazy as a bedbug!

JOE: I'd get another job if I could. There's no work — you know it.

EDNA: I only know we're at the bottom of the ocean.

JOE: What can I do?

EDNA: Whose the man in the family, you or me?

JOE: That's no answer. Get down to brass tacks. Christ, gimme a break, too! A coffee and java all day. I'm hungry, too, Babe. I'd work my fingers to the bone if —

EDNA: I'll open a can of salmon.

JOE: Not now. Tell me what to do!

EDNA: I'm not God!

Section 4

JOE: Jeez, I wish I was a kid again and didn't have to think about the next minute.

EDNA: But you're not a kid and you do have to think about the next minute. You got two blondie kids sleeping in the next room. They need food and clothes. I'm not mentioning anything else — But we're stalled like a flivver in the snow. For five years I laid awake at night listening to my heart pound. For God's sake, do something, Joe, get wise. Maybe get your buddies together, maybe go on strike for better money. Poppa did it during the war and they won out. I'm turning into a sour old nag.

JOE: *(defending himself)* Strikes don't work!

EDNA: Who told you?

JOE: Besides that means not a nickel a week while we're out. Then when it's over they don't take you back.

EDNA: Suppose they don't! What's to lose?

JOE: Well, we're averaging six-seven dollars a week now.

EDNA: That just pays for the rent.

JOE: That is something, Edna.

EDNA: It isn't. They'll push you down to three and four a week before you know it. Then you'll say, "That's something" too!

Section 5

JOE: There's too many cabs on the street, that's the whole damn trouble.

EDNA: Let the company worry about that, you big fool! If their cabs didn't make a profit, they'd take them off the streets. Or maybe you think they're in business just to pay Joe Mitchell's rent!

JOE: You don't know a-b-c, Edna.

EDNA: I know this — your boss is making suckers outa you boys every minute. Yes, and suckers out of all the wives and the poor innocent kids who'll grow up with crooked spines and sick bones. Sure, I see it in the papers, how good orange juice is for kids. But dammit our kids get colds one on top of the other. They look like little ghosts. Betty never saw a grapefruit. I took her to the store last week and she pointed to a stack of grapefruits. "What's that!" she said. My God, Joe — the world is supposed to be for all of us.

Section 6

JOE: You'll wake them up.

EDNA: I don't care, as long as I can maybe wake you up.

JOE: Don't insult me. One man can't make a strike.

EDNA: Who says one? You got hundreds in your rotten union!

JOE: The union ain't rotten.

EDNA: No? Then what are they doing? Collecting dues and patting your back?

JOE: They're making plans.

EDNA: What kind?

JOE: They don't tell us.

EDNA: It's too damn bad about you. They don't tell little Joey what's happening in his bitsie witsie union. What do you think it is — a ping pong game?

JOE: You know they're racketeers. The guys at the top would shoot you for a nickel.

EDNA: Why do you stand for that stuff?

JOE: Don't you wanna see me alive?

EDNA: *(after a deep pause),* No . . . I don't think I do, Joe. Not if if you can lift a finger to do something about it, and don't. No, I don't care.

JOE: Honey, you don't understand what —

EDNA: And any other hackie that won't fight . . . let them all be ground to hamburger!

JOE: It's one thing to —

EDNA: Take your hand away! Only don't grind me to little pieces! I got different plans. *(Starts to take off her apron.)*

Section 7

JOE: Where are you going?

EDNA: None of your business.

JOE: What's up your sleeve?

EDNA: My arm'd be up my sleeve, darling, if I had a sleeve to to wear. *(Puts neatly folded apron on back of chair.)*

JOE: Tell me!

EDNA: Tell you what?

JOE: Where are you going?

EDNA: Don't you remember my old boyfriend?

JOE: Who?

EDNA: Bud Haas. He still has my picture in his watch. He earns a living.

JOE: What the hell are you talking about?

EDNA: I heard worse than I'm talking about.

JOE: Have you seen Bud since we got married?

EDNA: Maybe.

JOE: If I thought . . .*(He stands looking at her.)*

EDNA: See much? Listen, boyfriend, if you think I won't do this it just means you can't see straight.

JOE: Stop talking bull!

EDNA: This isn't five years ago, Joe.

JOE: You mean you'd leave me and the kids?

EDNA: I'd leave you like a shot!

JOE: No . . .

EDNA: Yes! *(Joe turns away, sitting in a chair with his back to her.)*

JOE *(finally):* Well, I guess I ain't got a leg to stand on.

EDNA: No?

Section 8

JOE: *(suddenly mad)* No, you lousy tart, no! Get the hell out of here. Go pick up that bull-thrower on the corner and stop at some cushy downtown. He's probably been coming here every morning and laying you while I hacked my guts out!

EDNA: You're crawling like a worm!

JOE: You'll be crawling in a minute.

EDNA: You don't scare me that much! *(Indicates a half inch on her finger.)*

JOE: This is what I slaved for!

Section 9

EDNA: Tell it to your boss!

JOE: He don't give a damn for you or me!

EDNA: That's what I say.

JOE: Don't change the subject!

EDNA: This is the subject, the exact subject! Your boss makes this subject. I never saw him in my life, but he's putting ideas in my head a mile a minute. He's giving your kids that fancy disease called the rickets. He's making a jellyfish outa you and putting wrinkles in my face. This is the subject every inch of the way! He's throwing me into Bud Haas' lap. When in hell will you get wise —

JOE: I'm not so dumb as you think! But you are talking like a red.

EDNA: I don't know what that means. But when a man knocks you down you get up and kiss his fist! You gutless piece of boloney.

JOE: One man can't —

EDNA *(with great joy):* I don't say one man! I say a hundred, a thousand, a whole million, I say. But start in your own union. Get those hack boys together! Sweep out those racketeers like a pile of dirt! Stand up like men and fight for the crying kids and wives. Goddammit! I'm tired of slavery and sleepless nights.

JOE *(with her):* Sure, sure! . . .

EDNA: Yes. Get brass toes on your shoes and know where to kick!

JOE *(suddenly jumping up and kissing his wife full on the mouth):* Listen, Edna, I'm going down to 174th Street to look up Lefty Costello. Lefty was saying the other day . . . *(He suddenly stops.)* How about this Haas guy?

EDNA: Get out of here!

JOE: I'll be back! *(Runs out. For a moment* EDNA *stands triumphant.)*

ASSESSING JOB SKILLS

(from Job Service, Washington State Employment Security)

Before you begin a job hunt, it is important to be aware of your attributes as a working individual. You may have an assortment of fantastic qualities, but unless you can effectively communicate them to an employer, he or she will never call on you.

Take some time, then, to carefully analyze yourself. This pamphlet has been designed to help you do just that. It is a worksheet for your personal assessment. By answering the questions carefully, you will have outlined the skills you possess which can help you communicate them effectively to an employer.

Values

Everyone has values in terms of lifestyle, goals, and activities. If you can determine your values, you'll be able to make intelligent decisions about the kind of work you would most like to do.

Here are some questions to consider:
What kind of working environment do you prefer?

What kind of values are the most attractive to you: wealth, glamour, power, prestige, variety, security, service, achievement, creativity?

Which rewards are most valuable to you?

What are your goals for the next year? Five years? Ten?

If you could have any job, what would it be? What do you really want to do?

Do you prefer working with people? Data? Ideas? Things? A combination of these? In what order of importance?

If your answer was people, how do you see yourself relating to them: supervising, providing service, instructing, informing, counseling, cooperating, competing?

What are you striving for?

Look at the answers you have given to the **Values** questions. They should give some clues to the kind of work most suited to you. You will be happier and achieve a greater amount of satisfaction if the job you do get is compatible with your career preferences and ideals.

Skills

The term "skills" is often misunderstood. We sometimes think of skills as specifically defined trades. But skills in the broader definition of the word means activities which you are good at, or enjoy doing. We have all developed a number of skills.

For example, parents may not feel that years of raising children have provided much in the way of skills. Often though, parents have simply not been thinking about the skills they have learned.

Raising children requires several talents: the ability to pay attention to more than one thing at a time, to cook, to organize time, to clean houses, and all of these are marketable skills. With some careful thought, any activity you have participated in can be viewed in terms of the skills which were necessary to successfully complete it.

Think

Make a list of ten things you have accomplished in your life — things of which you are proud, activities you have participated in which make you feel really good about yourself.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Now, examine the ten and see if any pattern emerges. Try to pinpoint your areas of success. What are the things you do well? What do you enjoy doing the most? (Caution, these are two different questions.)

Translate your strength into skills. What do you perceive your strongest skill to be? Your next strongest? Make a list of your skills. Select five of them, beginning with the strongest and moving to the least strong. Do the same with the activities you enjoy the most. Hopefully, there will be some parallels between what you do well and what you enjoy.

Now you have begun to see yourself in positive terms. You have made a list of your assets — qualities which make you unique. By presenting yourself to an employer in terms of positive skills, it becomes easier to sell yourself into the job. You are convincing the employer that you are a valuable commodity to the organization.

RESEARCHING THE JOB MARKET

(from Job Service, Washington State Employment Security)

There are no short-cuts in job hunting, and job hunting is one of the most difficult tasks in life. After you have taken the time to assess your job skills and know the type of job you want, you can begin to look for a job that will use those skills. You need to research the job market to find available jobs. Since relatively few jobs are advertised, this can be a time consuming process.

Several sources of information and ways to gather information about job openings are available to you. Use all of them. Remember, job finding success is proportional to how many different sources a job hunter uses. The more used, the greater likelihood of finding the job you want.

Keep a record of your job hunt in systematic manner. Remember all job contacts. Here are some ideas for gathering information and some places to look for specific job opportunities.

People You Know

Your first source of job information will probably be friends, neighbors and relatives. Most people find out about their jobs through someone they know. Tell people you are looking. Tell them twice. You want them to remember you when they hear of job opportunities. Through their work or social contacts, they may know of opportunities that are not normally listed with regular sources. Follow up leads immediately.

Door-to-Door Approach

One of the most effective job hunting methods is personally knocking on the door of the person who has the power to hire. There is simply no substitute for the personal meeting between prospective employer and you, the potential employee.

Tell the employer you would like to talk to him/her about future employment. It is impossible for anyone to say, "We're never going to have any future openings." Get suggestions about other places to call and get permission to use that person's name as a referral. Then you may say to the new contact, "Mr. Smith of Taylor Tool Company suggested I talk to you."

You should research for information about the organization before you make a visit, and while there, seek more information.

You will be nervous the first couple of times you go door-to-door. Everybody is. The more people you visit, however, the more confidence you will gain.

The State Employment Service

The Washington State Employment Security Department has more job listings in more occupational categories than any other single source in the state. Job placement services are available through a statewide network of approximately 30 Job Service Centers (JSCs) and their satellite offices. And, if you are thinking about moving out of state, there are approximately 2,500 job service centers conveniently located in all parts of the country. The job service centers operate computerized job banks in all major cities and many smaller ones to bring up-to-the-minute information on new job openings. No fee is charged for their services in helping you find a job.

In addition to placement service, the job service centers have local, state and national labor market information. Career counseling and aptitude/proficiency testing are also available. And ask about employment programs for persons with special needs, such as veterans, older workers or disabled people. Check the phone directory under Washington State for the office nearest you.

Want Ads

Another source worth exploring is the employment advertisements appearing in newspapers, trade magazines and professional journals. Don't delay with want ads; check immediately. Follow directions. If the ad says "call," call; if it says "appear in person," appear, don't call.

Civil Service

A civil service job means working for the city, county, state or the federal government. Check with civil service commissions in your area. They are sources of information regarding a wide range of professional, technical, clerical, crafts or service jobs in government. Jobs are filled on a merit basis as determined by the results of examinations and ratings of experience and education. No fees are charged.

Private Employment Agencies

You may want to try using the services of a private employment agency in your job search. Agencies charge a fee to either the applicant or the employer when a job placement is made.

Other Sources

Make a list of possible employers by using the telephone book or a business or industrial directory from your area to get the names, addresses and telephone numbers of organizations you feel can use your talents. Check with the Chamber of Commerce for any employer lists they might have.

This is, of course, a broad listing. As you find out more about the organizations, you can decide which ones fit you best, and take the others off the list. The only expense to you is the effort made on your part.

CHAPTER TWO: FAMILIES

YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND by Jose Pacheco

She took my hand as we crossed the street, and I felt the dampness of her palm.

"I want to play in the park for a while."

"No. It's too late. We have to get home; your mother is waiting for us. Look, there's nobody else around. All the little children are home in bed."

The street light changed. The cars moved forward. We ran across the street. The smell of exhaust dissolved into the freshness of grass and foliage. The last remnants of rain evaporated or were absorbed by the sprouts, leaves, roots, nervations.

"Are there going to be any mushrooms?"

"Yes, I guess so."

"When?"

"Well, I guess by tomorrow there should be some."

"Will you bring me here to see them?"

"Yes, but you'll have to go to bed right away so you can get up early." I walked too quickly, and the child had to hurry to keep up with me.

She stopped, lifted her eyes, looked at me to gain courage, and asked slightly embarrassed, "Daddy, do dwarfs really exist?"

"Well, they do in stories."

"And witches?"

"Yes, but also just in stories."

"That's not true."

"Why?"

"I've seen witches on TV, and they scare me a lot."

"They shouldn't. Everything you see on television is also stories with witches -- made up to entertain children, not scare them."

"Oh, so everything they show on TV is just stories?"

"No, not everything, I mean . . . how can I explain it to you? You wouldn't understand."

Night fell. A livid firmament fluted with grayish clouds.* In the garbage cans, Sunday's refuse began to decay: newspapers, beer cans, sandwich wrappers. Beyond the distant drone of traffic, raindrops could be heard falling from the leaves and tree trunks onto the grass. The path wound through a clearing between two groves of trees. At that moment, the shouts reached my ears: ten or twelve boys had surrounded another. With his back against the tree, he looked at them with fear but did not scream for help or mercy. My daughter grabbed my hand again.

"What are they doing?"

"I don't know. Fighting. Let's go. Come on, hurry up."

The fragile pressure of her fingers was like a reproach. She had figured it out: I was accountable to her. At the same time, my daughter represented an alibi, a defense against fear and excessive guilt.

We stood absolutely still. I managed to see the face — the dark skin reddened by white hands — of the boy who was being festively beaten by the others. I shouted at them to stop. Only one of them turned around to look at me, and he made a threatening, scornful gesture. The girl watched all of this without blinking. The boy fell, and they kicked him on the ground. Someone picked him up, and the others kept slugging him, I did not dare move. I wanted to believe that if I did not intervene, it was to protect my daughter, because I knew there was nothing I could do against all twelve of them.

"Daddy, tell them to stop. Scold them."

"Don't move. Wait here for me."

Before I finished speaking, they were already running quickly away, dispersing in all directions. I felt obscenely liberated. I cherished the cowardly hope that my daughter would think they had run away from me. We approached. The boy rose with difficulty. He was bleeding from his nose and mouth.

"Let me help you. I'll take you . . ."

He looked at me without answering. He wiped the blood off with the cuffs of his checkered shirt. I offered him a handkerchief. Not even a no: disgust in his eyes. Something — an undefinable horror — in the girl's expression. Both of their faces were an aura of deceit, a pain of betrayal. He turned his back on us. He walked away dragging his feet. For a moment I thought he would collapse. He continued until he disappeared among the trees. Silence.

"Let's go. Let's get out of here."

"Why did they do that to him if he wasn't doing anything to them?"

"I guess because they were fighting."

"But there were lots of them."

"I know. I know."

"They're bad because they hit him, right?"

"Of course. That's the wrong thing to do."

The park seemed to go on forever. We would never reach the bus. We would never return home. She would never stop asking me questions nor I giving her the same answers they undoubtedly gave me at her age.

"So, that means he's good?"

"Who?"

"The boy the others made bleed? Or is he bad too?"

"No, no. The others are the bad ones because of what they did."

Finally we found a policeman. I describe to him what I had just witnessed.

"There's nothing to be done. It happens every night. You did the right thing by not interfering. They are always armed and can be dangerous. They claim the park is only for whites and that any dirty nigger who steps foot in here will suffer the consequences."

"But they don't have the right, they can't do that."

"What are you talking about? That's what the people in the neighborhood say. But when it comes down to it, they won't let blacks come to their houses or sit in their bars."

He gave the child an affectionate pat and continued on his way. I understood that clichés like "the world's indifference" were not totally meaningless. Three human beings — the victim, my daughter, myself -- had just been dramatically affected by something about which nobody else seemed to care.

I was cold, tired, and felt like closing my eyes. We reached the edge of the park. Three black boys crossed the street with us. No one had ever looked at me like that. I saw their switchblades and thought they were going to attack us. But they kept going and disappeared into the grove.

"Daddy, what are they going to do?"

"Not let happen to them what happened to the other one."

"But why do they always have to fight?"

"I can't explain it to you, it's too difficult, you wouldn't understand."

I knelt down to button up her coat. I hugged her gently, with tenderness and fear. The dampness of the trees encircled us. The park was advancing upon the city and again — or overtly — everything would be jungle.

*This sentence describes the color of the night sky:
livid — black and blue, purplish
firmament -- sky, heavens
fluted — rippled

WORKSHEET -- FAMILY STORIES FROM CONVERSATIONS

CHARACTERS: Who are your characters? Name them and write at least two sentences to describe each one.

....

....

....

....

....

....

SETTING: Where and when might this conversation take place? What does the setting look like?

....

....

....

....

PLOT: What events might lead up to this conversation? What might happen because of it? What might the characters do to each other?

....

....

....

THEME: Does your story have a lesson or underlying meaning? What is it?

....

....

THE MYTH OF OEDIPUS

King Laius of Thebes had just heard terrible news. The priest at Delphi had predicted that Laius would be killed by his son. The predictions from Delphi were never wrong.

Laius was determined to avoid this fate. So when a son was born, he gave the baby to a servant, saying, "Carry this child away and kill him." However, the boy's mother, Queen Jocasta, intervened. She bribed the servant and told him not to kill the baby but just to leave him in the desert. "Perhaps," she hoped, "someone will find my son and save him."

This is what happened. A shepherd happened by and found the baby. He took the boy to Corinth and presented him to the king and queen. King Polybus of Corinth had no children. He and his wife were overjoyed to receive this baby, and they raised him like their own son. They named him Oedipus.

Oedipus grew up to be a brave, intelligent, and talented prince. When he was a young man, he decided to go to Delphi. It was common for noble young men to go there and hear predictions about their future. But the prediction that Oedipus heard was terrible! He would kill his own father and afterward kill himself. Oedipus never knew that King Polybus was not his natural father. He vowed that he would never return to Polybus so that the prediction would never come true.

Oedipus became a wanderer. One day, he traveled close to Thebes. A terrible monster, called a sphinx, was tormenting that city. It had the head of a woman, the body of a lion, and the wings of an eagle. The sphinx waited by the road into Thebes. To every traveler, she posed a riddle. Whoever could not answer it was killed. So far, no one had been successful, and many innocent people had died. Oedipus no longer cared if he lived or died. He decided to challenge the sphinx.

On the way to Thebes, he passed a nobleman and his servants. The road was too narrow for two chariots to pass. Someone would have to move out of the way. Both Oedipus and the nobleman were too proud to give way. Fighting broke out. One of Oedipus' horses was killed. Oedipus, in turn, killed the nobleman and all but one of his men. He later discovered that the nobleman he had killed was none other than King Laius! He had killed his true father, just as the predictions from Delphi had said.

But Oedipus did not know this yet. He traveled on and met the sphinx. This was her riddle: "What walks on four legs in the morning, two legs in the afternoon, and three legs at night?"

Oedipus thought a while and answered, "The answer is a man. As a child, I crawled on hands and knees, and that is four feet. I now walk on two legs, but an old man with a cane walks on three legs. Is this correct?"

The riddle had at last been answered. The sphinx screamed with rage and leaped over a cliff to its death. Oedipus was hailed as a hero. The people of Thebes soon learned that King Laius was dead, though they did not know how he had died. They invited Oedipus to be their king. He accepted and married Jocasta, the widowed queen!

For a while, their kingdom prospered. Oedipus and Jocasta had several children and all seemed well. Then, mysterious hardships came to the land. Many people of Thebes lay dead. Oedipus sent for a famous seer -- a man who had the power to see hidden truth. Piece by piece, the true story came out. Oedipus was the boy who had been left to die. He was the child of Laius and Jocasta. He had killed his father just as the predictions had said. He had married his mother and had children with her. This was the cause of the terrible things that were happening in Thebes.

Jocasta the queen killed herself when she heard this. Oedipus put out his eyes and became blind. Later, after a long and sorrowful time, he killed himself. The final prediction was fulfilled.

Pronouncing the Greek names and cities

People:
Jocasta - jo kas ta
Laius - lay us
Oedipus - ed a pas
sphinx -sfinks

Cities:
Thebes - theebz
Delphi - del fi
Corinth - kor inth

CHAPTER THREE: HOUSING

HOME by Gwendolyn Brooks

What had been wanted was this always, this always to last, the talking softly on this porch, with the snake plant in the jardiniere in the southwest corner, and the obstinate slip from Aunt Eppie’s magnificent Michigan fern at the left side of the friendly door. Mama, Maud Martha, and Helen rocked slowly in their rocking chairs, and looked at the late afternoon light on the lawn, and at the emphatic iron of the fence and at the poplar tree. These things might soon be theirs no longer. Those shafts and pools of light, the tree, the graceful iron, might soon be viewed possessively by different eyes.

Papa was to have gone that noon, during his lunch hour, to the office of the Home Owners’ Loan. If he had not succeeded in getting another extension, they would be leaving this house in which they had lived for more than fourteen years. There was little hope. The Home Owners’ Loan was hard. They sat, making their plans.

“We’ll be moving into a nice flat somewhere,” said Mama. “Somewhere on South Park, or Michigan, or in Washington Park Court.” Those flats, as the girls and Mama knew well, were burdens on wages twice the size of Papa’s. This was not mentioned now.

“They’re much prettier than this old house,” said Helen. “I have friends I’d just as soon not bring here. And I have other friends that wouldn’t come down this far for anything, unless they were in a taxi.”

Yesterday, Maud Martha would have attacked her. Tomorrow she might. Today she said nothing. She merely gazed at a little hopping robin in the tree, her tree, and tried to keep the fronts of her eyes dry.

“Well, I do know,” said Mama, turning her hands over and over,” that I’ve been getting tireder and tireder of doing that firing. From October to April, there’s firing to be done.”

“But lately we’ve been helping, Harry and I,” said Maud Martha. “And sometimes in March and April and in October, and even in November, we could build a little fire in the fireplace. Sometimes the weather was just right for that.”

She knew, from the way they looked at her, that this had been a mistake. They did not want to cry.

But she felt that the little line of white, somewhat ridged with smoked purple, and all that cream-shot saffron, would never drift across any western sky except that in back of this house. The rain would drum with as sweet a dullness nowhere but here. The birds on South Park were mechanical birds, no better than the poor caught canaries in those "rich" women's sun parlors.

"It's just going to kill Papa!" burst out Maud Martha, "He loves this house! He lives for this house!"

"He lives for us," said Helen. "It's us he loves. He wouldn't want the house, except for us."

"And he'll have us," added Mama, "wherever."

"You know," Helen sighed, "if you want to know the truth, this is a relief. If this hadn't come up, we would have gone on, just dragged on, hanging out here forever." "It might," allowed Mama, "be an act of God. God may just have reached down, and picked up the reins."

"Yes," Maud Martha cracked in, "that's what you always say — that God knows best."

Her mother looked at her quickly, decided the statement was not suspect, looked away.

Helen saw Papa coming. "There's Papa," said Helen.

They could not tell a thing from the way Papa was walking. It was that same dear little staccato walk, one shoulder down, then the other, then repeat, and repeat. They watched his progress. He passed the vacant lot, he passed Mrs. Blakemore's. They wanted to hurl themselves over the fence, into the street, and shake the truth out of his collar. He opened his gate — the gate — and still his stride and face told them nothing.

"Hello," he said.

Mama got up and followed him through the front door. The girls knew better than to go in too.

Presently Mama's head emerged. Her eyes were lamps turned on.

"It's all right," she exclaimed. "He got it. It's all over. Everything is all right."

The door slammed shut. Mama's footsteps hurried away.

"I think," said Helen, rocking rapidly, "I think I'll give a party. I haven't given a party since I was eleven. I'd like some of my friends to just casually see that we're home owners."

WORKSHEET FOR: HOME by Gwendolyn Brooks

PART I. Vocabulary and Dictionary Skills.

The dictionary often lists several meanings for a word. Knowing how to use the dictionary means being able to pick out the right meaning for a particular sentence. All the answers below are true meanings for the underlined word. Circle the meaning that fits in the sentence.

1. They wanted this to last.

    a. come at the end
    b. go on for a long time
    c. a wooden form for making shoes

2. The slip from Aunt Eppie's fern grew by the front door.

    a. a slide
    b. a woman's underskirt
    c. a cutting from a plant
    d. an escape

3. We're moving to a nice flat somewhere.

    a. a box for fruit
    b. low and smooth
    c. a low marsh near a river
    d. an apartment

4. They heard the rain drum with a sweet dullness.

    a. a musical rhythm instrument
    b. make a beating sound
    c. get rid of
    d. part of the brakes of a car

PART II: Powerful language in the story. What does the author mean by the following sentences and phases.

1. the friendly door

2. shafts and pools of light

3. that same dear little staccato walk

4. Her eyes were lamps turned on.

5. The flats were burdens on wages twice the size of Papa's.

6. The birds in South Park were mechanical birds, no better than the poor caught canaries in those "rich" women's sun parlors.

7. . . . the little line of white, somewhat ridged with smoked purple, and all that cream-shot saffron

8. They wanted to shake the truth out of his collar.

9. She tried to keep the fronts of her eyes dry.

10. God may have reached down and picked up the reins.

LANDLORD'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Landlord shall:

1. Keep the place in decent condition and keep any common areas reasonably clean and safe.
2. Make sure the place to complies with all codes, statutes and ordinances that affect the tenant's health or safety.
3. Provide for control of insects, rodents and other pests when they are not caused by the tenant. In single family places, provide for control of pests only at the beginning of the tenancy.
4. Maintain walls, doors, roof, etc. and keep the place in reasonably weather tight condition.
5. Maintain all electrical, plumbing, heating and other similar things that the landlord has put in the place.
6. Provide locks and keys to the tenants.
7. Provide garbage cans and arrange for regular disposal of waste. In the case of single family places, the tenant is responsible.
8. Provide reasonable heat and water for the tenant.
9. Let the tenant know the name and address of the person who the landlord is in writing.
10. Notify the tenant by certified mail if the landlord changes. The notice must come right away.
11. Name someone in charge, who lives in the same county, if the landlord lives out of state.

The Landlord shall not:

1. Shut off a tenant's utilities on purpose.
2. Lock out a tenant.
3. Take a tenant's personal property unless the landlord has permission. The landlord must return the property.
4. Enter the place without proper notice except in emergencies.
5. Try to physically remove the tenant from the place.

TENANT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Tenant shall:

1. Pay the rent on the date required by the rental agreement.
2. Obey all reasonable rules which are explained when the tenant first moves in. Also, obey rules that are made later after written notice by landlord.
3. Comply with all city, county, and state rules and regulations.
4. Keep the place clean.
5. Dispose of all garbage in the proper way. Get rid of pests caused by the tenant.
6. Use all appliances supplied by the landlord properly.
7. Leave the place in as good a condition as at the beginning except for normal wear and tear. The tenant will be responsible for any damages he/she has caused.

The Tenant shall not:

1. Destroy, damage or remove any part of the place or its equipment on purpose or from neglect.
2. Permit a nuisance.
3. Be unreasonable about letting the landlord enter the residence.
4. Permit family or guests to destroy or damage property.

DISCRIMINATION

State law prohibits discrimination in housing based on race, creed, color, national origin, sex, or marital status. Violations should be reported to the office of the Washington State Human Rights Commission. Some local governments have passed additional laws to protect tenants from discrimination in housing.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS OF THE LAW

The landlord/tenant law covers several other topics, including repairs, rental agreements, deposits, evictions, tenants rights to privacy, and so on. For example:

A tenant must always give the landlord written notice of a needed repair and allow him/her time to complete it (24 hours to begin repairs of heat, water, and life-threatening conditions, 2 - 30 days to begin other repairs.) If the landlord does not comply, the tenant can often deduct the cost of small repairs from the rent.

The landlord cannot retaliate (get even) against tenants for carrying out their rights under this law.

Thirty days' written notice is required for changes in a month-to-month rental agreement, and 20 days notice is required to end the agreement. There are a few exceptions, including:
— if the landlord wants to make the apartment into a condominium or to exclude children (90 days notice required)
— if tenant has not paid rent (3 days notice)
— if the rental agreement was violated (10 days notice)
— if the tenant has destroyed property, caused a nuisance, or conducted an illegal business in the residence (3 days notice)
— if both parties agree to an earlier date.

Any tenant who pays a deposit must receive:
— a written rental agreement
— a written checklist describing the condition of the place when the tenant moves in
— a receipt for the money paid
— a statement of exactly why the deposit may be withheld.

Tenants have the right to appear in court and explain their side before being evicted. (If the court decides the landlord is right, the tenant may have to pay damages and attorney fees.)

If a tenant fails to pay rent and abandons the place or shows that he or she plans to leave:
— the landlord may remove the tenant's property immediately (and may sell most of it after properly notifying the tenant)
— the tenant may have to pay additional rent.

More complete information is available from the Seattle Tenants' Union, 3902 S. Ferdinand, Seattle, WA (206) 723-0500.

Worksheet for:

LANDLORD AND TENANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Using *Responsibilities of Landlords and Tenants* as a guide, decide who is right and who is wrong in the two situations below. If possible, tell which numbered rules in the handout apply to the situations.

1. John lives in a run-down apartment house. A month ago his water heater broke, so now he has to heat water on the stove. The manager says it broke while John was living in the apartment, so he must fix it.

In the basement, garbage is piling up because no one comes to pick it up. The hallways between apartments are a real mess. They haven't been cleaned in years. The manager argues that tenants must take care of their own garbage and keep the building clean. John doesn't think this is fair.

John would like to complain to the landlord, but he doesn't know who he is, and the manager says it's none of his business.

Who is right and why?

2. Ellen lives in an old house. The landlord is angry with her since she is a month behind on her rent. She doesn't want to pay the rent until the landlord puts a washer and dryer in the house.

The landlord is also unhappy about T-Bone, Ellen's German Shepherd. He says he can't get near the house because the dog barks at him and that neighbors have complained about the dog. Ellen thinks that is just fine. She likes her privacy and the landlord shouldn't be coming by to bother her anyway.

Who is right and why?

MADAM AND THE RENT MAN

by Langston Hughes

The rent man knocked.
He said, Howdy-do?
I said, What
Can I do for you
He said, You know
Your rent is due.

I said, Listen,
Before I'd pay
I'd go to Hades
And rot away!

The sink is broke,
the water don't run,
And you ain't done a thing
You promised to've done.

Back window's cracked,
kitchen floor squeaks,
There's rats in the cellar,
And the attic leaks.

He said, Madam,
It's not up to me.
I'm just the agent,
Don't you see?

I said, Naturally,
You pass the buck.
If it's money you want
You're out of luck.

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